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II NAPOLEONE



MEMOIRS  
OF  
CONSTANT

*THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON'S HEAD VALET*

CONTAINING DETAILS OF THE PRIVATE LIFE OF  
NAPOLEON, HIS FAMILY AND  
HIS COURT

NOW FIRST TRANSLATED BY  
PERCY PINKERTON

FOUR VOLUMES—VOLUME II



H. S. NICHOLS  
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# MEMOIRS OF CONSTANT

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## CHAPTER I

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HIS MAJESTY the Emperor spent the month of January, 1806, at Munich and Stuttgardt. It

was in the first-named capital that the marriage of the Viceroy with the Princess of Bavaria took place. There were splendid festivities on this occasion, the hero of the hour being, of course, the Emperor. His hosts were at a loss how to pay homage enough to the great man for whose military genius they had such deep admiration.

The Viceroy and his wife had never met before their marriage, but they soon grew as fond of each other as if they were old friends. Never were two people better suited to each other; and no princess, no mother indeed, could have shown greater love for her children than the Vice-Queen. She might in truth have served as a model for her sex. One story about her I should like to chronicle here. It appears that one of her daughters, when still quite a child, spoke rudely to one of the maid-servants. When Her Most Serene Highness knew of this, as a lesson to her daughter, she forbade the servants to wait upon the little Princess or pay any heed to her requests. The child soon came to complain to her mother, who gravely told her that if she required people to wait upon her she ought to show her appreciation of such services by polite and courteous conduct. Then she told her daughter to go and apologise to the maid-servant, and to speak gently and civilly to her in future. The child obeyed,

and of such profit was this lesson to her that, if public rumour be credited, she has become one of the most accomplished princesses in Europe. The fame of her perfections even spread in the New World, which eagerly disputed with the Old for her possession, and, eventually, had the good fortune to carry off the prize. To-day, as I believe, she is Empress of Brazil.

His Majesty the King of Bavaria, Maximilian Joseph, was tall and handsome. He was about fifty years old. He had most charming manners, and before the Revolution enjoyed a great reputation at Strasburg for good breeding and gallant chivalry when colonel of the Alsace Regiment. Prince Max, as the soldiers called him. His subjects, his family, his servants, one and all, adored him. He often walked about the streets of Munich by himself in the morning, visiting the markets, chaffering for wheat, entering shops and talking to everybody, especially children, whom he bade hasten along to school. This excellent Prince did not fear to compromise his dignity by such simple, unaffected conduct; and he was right, for I think no one would ever have shown him disrespect. The love he inspired in no way diminished the reverence. So devoted was he to the Emperor that his good-nature was extended to persons who by their duties were brought closest to the

Sovereign, and were thus most fitted to know his needs and wishes. Thus His Majesty the King of Bavaria never came to see the Emperor that he did not shake hands with me. I am giving this as an instance of his affability, not of my own vanity. He always asked after the Emperor's health, and then after mine, saying countless things which showed his attachment to the Emperor and his own kindly disposition.

His Majesty the King of Bavaria is now in the tomb, like him who gave him a throne. But his tomb is yet a Royal one, at which his loyal subjects, kneeling, may weep. The Emperor's, on the contrary; what of that? Maximilian was able to leave his sceptre to a son worthy of him, the sceptre that he got from the exile who died at Saint-Helena!

Prince Louis, to-day King of Bavaria, and perhaps the most worthy Sovereign in Europe, was not so tall as his august father. His face, too, was not so handsome, and he suffered from an unfortunate deafness which made him raise his voice unconsciously when speaking. He also stammered slightly. The Bavarians were very fond of him. Studious and thoughtful, the Emperor saw that he had merit, yet did not count upon his friendship, while never suspecting him of disloyalty. In fact, the Prince Royal was above such suspicion; yet

the Emperor knew that he belonged to the party that feared the subjugation of Germany and that suspected that the French, though they had only attacked Austria, nurtured schemes of conquest directed against all Germany. Prince Louis came to Paris at the beginning of the year 1806, and I often saw him at the play in the Arch-Chancellor's box. They were both slumbering profoundly; indeed, this was a habit of M. Cambacérès. When the Emperor, asking for him, was told that he was at the play, he would say: "All right! all right! he's having a doze; don't disturb him."

The King of Würtemberg was tall, and so fat that they used to say that God had made him in order to show how far a man's skin would stretch. Such were the dimensions of his stomach that his place at table was marked by a deep indenture. Notwithstanding such precaution, he was obliged to hold his plate level with his chin in order to eat his soup. He went out shooting, of which he was very fond, either on horseback or in a little Russian carriage and four, often driving himself. He liked riding, but it was not an easy thing to get him a mount equal to carrying such a huge weight. The poor animal had to be gradually trained up to it. For this purpose the King's groom used to wear a leaden belt, the weight of which he daily increased until it was equal to

that of His Majesty. This King was despotic, harsh, and even cruel. He had to sign the sentence of all condemned criminals, and, from what I heard at Stuttgart, he nearly always added to the punishment decreed by the judges. Bad-tempered and brutal, he often struck his servants; they even went so far as to say that he did not spare Her Majesty the Queen, his wife, a sister of the actual King of England. Yet he was a Prince whom for his knowledge and intellect the Emperor esteemed. He liked him and was liked in return, and he found him to the very last true to his allegiance. King Frederick of Würtemberg had a large and brilliant Court, maintained upon a scale of great magnificence. The hereditary Prince was much beloved. He was less arrogant and more humane than his father, being, so they said, both liberal and just.

Besides the Royalties he himself crowned, the Emperor, when in Bavaria, received many princes and princesses of the Confederation, who usually dined with His Majesty. Among this crowd of Royal guests was the Prince Primate, who, in manners, bearing and attire, differed in no respect from the finest of Parisian *beaux*, and the Emperor made a point of treating him with special courtesy. I cannot say as much for the dresses of the princesses, duchesses and other noble dames. Most



of them were dressed in shocking taste ; into their head-dress they stuck, in a clumsy, inartistic way, flowers, feathers and strips of gold and silver gauze, and, above all, quantities of diamond hairpins.

The equipages of the German nobility were all big, roomy coaches ; they were indeed indispensable, owing to the huge paniers still worn by these ladies. Such faithful adherence to superannuated modes was the more surprising since Germany at that epoch enjoyed the precious privilege of possessing two journals of fashion. One was a translation of *M. de la Mésangère* ; the other, also edited in Paris, was translated and published at Mannheim. To such shabby carriages, which looked like our old diligences, scraggy horses were harnessed with ropes, and so far apart that in order to turn the coach the driver needed immense space.

The Prince of Saxe-Gotha was long and lean. In spite of his great age he was dandified enough to get made for himself in Paris, by our famous hairdresser, Michalon, pretty little wigs of blonde hair ; like a child's, with tiny curls like those of a cherub. However, he was an excellent man. "

Talking of these noble German ladies, I remember seeing, at a Court play at Fontainebleau, a princess of the Confederation, who was presented to Their Majesties. The costume of Her Highness proclaimed the immense progress of elegant civilisa-

tion beyond the Rhine. Discarding those gothic paniers the Princess had adopted fashions more modern. Aged about seventy, she wore a black lace gown over pink satin, her head-dress consisting of a white muslin veil, secured by a crown of roses, like those of the vestals at the opera. She had her little grand-daughter with her, brilliant with all the charm of youth, who was admired by the whole Court, although her dress was not in such perfect taste as her grandmother's.

I once heard the Empress Josephine say that she had the greatest difficulty to keep from laughing on one occasion, when, among the German princesses, one was announced as Cunegonde. Her Majesty added, that when she saw this Princess sitting down she kept imagining how she would look if leaning on one side. Surely the Empress must have read the "Adventures of Candide and the daughter of Baron de Thunder-Ten-Trunck."

In the spring of 1806, one saw in Paris almost as many members of the Confederation as I had seen in the capitals of Bavaria and Würtemberg. A French name was included among the foreign ones; it was that of Prince Murat, who, in March, was created Grand Duke of Berg and of Cleves. After Prince Louis of Bavaria, the hereditary Prince of Baden arrived, who came to wed one of the Empress's nieces.

At the outset, this union was hardly a happy one. Princess Stephanie was a very pretty woman, full of grace and wit. The Emperor wished to make a great lady of her, so he married her off without consulting her overmuch. Prince Charles Louis Frederick, who was then twenty years old, was an excellent young man, possessed of many estimable qualities. He was brave and generous, but heavy, phlegmatic, icily serious, and wholly wanting in all that could please a young Princess used to the brilliant elegance of the Imperial Court.

The marriage took place in April, to the great satisfaction of the Prince, who, on that day, at least, seemed to put aside his air of habitual gravity. He actually permitted himself to smile. The day passed off well enough, but at night-time, when the moment came for the husband to exercise his rights, he met with stubborn resistance. The Princess cried out, wept, grew angry, and, at last, persuaded her old schoolfellow, Nelly Boujoly, to sleep in her room, a young lady to whom she was particularly attached. The Prince was greatly distressed; he besought his wife to be reasonable, and promised to yield to her wishes; but all his promises and entreaties availed nothing—at least, for a whole week.

They told him that the Princess thought his wig was hideous, that she detested nothing more than a bob-tailed wig. The worthy Prince at once

went and had his hair cut. When she saw his shaven pate she burst out into fits of laughter, saying that with his hair done Titus fashion he was uglier than ever.

At last, as it was impossible for the Princess, with her wit and good-nature, not to appreciate her husband's sterling qualities, she gave in, loving him, after a while, as dearly as he loved her. Indeed, I am assured that the august pair were most happy in their home.

Three months after this marriage the Prince left his wife to join the Emperor, first in the Prussian, and afterwards in the Polish campaign. By the death of his grandfather, which occurred soon after the Austrian campaign of 1809, he became possessor of the Grand Duchy. The command of his troops he then gave to his uncle, the Count de Hochberg, and he returned to his country, never again to leave it.

I saw him with the Princess at Erfurt, where I heard that he was jealous of the Emperor Alexander, who, as they said, was flirting desperately with his wife. The Prince left Erfurt very suddenly in consequence, taking the Princess with him. In justice to her, one ought to add that she had never given the slightest grounds for jealousy, though, indeed, such jealousy might be pardoned in the husband of so charming a woman.

The Prince had weak health. From his childhood alarming symptoms had been noticed, and physical ailments, doubtless, had much to do with the melancholia which underlay his whole disposition. He died in 1818, after a long and painful malady, during which his wife tenderly nursed him. He had four children, two sons and two daughters. The two sons died at an early age, and they would have left the sovereignty of Baden without heirs if the Counts of Hochberg had not been recognised as members of the Ducal family. The Grand Duchess is to-day entirely given up to the education of her daughters, who bid fair to equal her in grace and accomplishments.

The wedding of the Prince and Princess of Baden was celebrated by brilliant *fêtes*. At Rambouillet there was a grand shooting-party, and Their Majesties, with several members of their family and all the princes and princesses of Baden, Cleves, &c., walked all over the Rambouillet covers.

I recollect another shooting-party, given about the same time, in the forest of Saint-Germain, to which the Emperor had invited the Turkish Ambassador, who had just arrived in Paris. His Excellency proved to be an ardent sportsman, albeit he never moved a muscle of his austere countenance. The brute being run to earth, the Emperor caused a gun to be given to the Turkish Ambassador, so that he

might have the honour of shooting the first shot, but he declined, doubtless unable to conceive what pleasure there could possibly be in killing a wretched, exhausted animal, which had not even the strength to escape.

## CHAPTER II

*Coalition of Russia and England against the Emperor—The Boulogne army marches towards the Rhine—The Emperor's departure—The Tuileries before and after this event—Arrival at Strasburg—Generals Chardon and Vandamme—The dozen bottles of Rhine wine—The Emperor displeased—Vandamme sent to the Würtemberg army—He obtains pardon—The Emperor's extraordinary coolness and courage—The Emperor's cloak serves as a shroud—Ulm capitulates—The Imperial Guard at Augsburg—The Russo-Prussian alliance—The Emperor's bivouac—His slumber—He visits the outposts—Military illuminations—I make the Emperor some punch—I am tired out—Battle of Austerlitz—General Rapp wounded—The Emperor goes to see him—Treaty of peace—Stay at Vienna and Schœnbrunn—Strange meeting—Napoleon and M. de Marbœuf's daughter—Moustache the courier—His zeal and courage—His horse drops down dead.*

AFTER our return from Italy, the Emperor only stayed a few days in Paris, and soon started for the camp at Boulogne. The *fêtes* at Milan did not hinder him from following up his political schemes. Thus there was good reason for his driving his post-horses to death on the road from Turin to Paris. The explanation for such haste soon trans-

pired. Austria had secretly joined the Russo-English coalition against the Emperor. The army at the Boulogne camp received orders to march on the Rhine, and towards the end of September His Majesty left to rejoin the troops. According to custom, he only let us know of his departure an hour before he started. Strange was the contrast between the noisy confusion which preceded his going and the silence by which it was followed. Scarcely had the order been given than each servant hastily provided for the needs of his master and his own. There was much scuffling to and fro in corridors and the noise of the packing and removal of boxes and chests. In the courtyards, carriages and carts of all sorts, with men busily loading them by torchlight; oaths and impatient cries resounding everywhere. Women, in their rooms, were each bewailing the departure of a husband, a brother or a son. While such preparations were being made, the Emperor took leave of the Empress or else had a brief nap. Then, at the appointed time, he rose, was dressed and got into the carriage. An hour afterwards all was silent at the château; only a few persons were to be seen wandering about like ghosts. Silence succeeded to noise, and solitude to the hubbub of a brilliant, numerous throng of courtiers. Next morning one only saw a few pale, weeping women, telling each other of their trouble and



distress. Many courtiers arrived to pay their respects to the Emperor, and were amazed at his absence. To them, it was as if, that day, the sun had not risen.

The Emperor went straight to Strasburg without stopping, and the day after his arrival there the army commenced crossing the Kehl bridge. On the day previous to this crossing the Emperor had issued orders to the generals in command to assemble on the banks of the Rhine the next morning at six o'clock precisely. An hour before that time the Emperor stationed himself at the entrance to the bridge, despite the pouring rain, to make sure that his orders were duly executed. Rain continued to fall until just as the troops commenced to advance upon the bridge, and the Emperor was soaked to the skin; in fact, the water ran off him and his horse's belly in a regular rivulet. So badly did his little hat fare that one side of it hung down his back, like the big felt hats worn by Paris coal-heavers. The generals whom he expected now assembled round him, when he thus addressed them:

"All is well, gentlemen; we have now gained another step upon our enemies. But where is Vandamme?"

General Chardon, a great favourite of the Emperor's, replied:

"I think, Sire, that General Vandamme is still

asleep. Last night we drank a dozen bottles of Rhine wine together, and no doubt——”

“He was quite right to have a drink, sir,” the Emperor struck in; “but it is wrong of him to be asleep when I am here, waiting for him.”

General Chardon was about to despatch his aide-de-camp to fetch his companion-in-arms, but the Emperor stopped him, saying:

“We’ll let Vandamme sleep; I will talk to him later on.”

Just then the truant General appeared, when the Emperor cried:

“Ah, there you are, sir! It seems you forgot all about the order I gave yesterday.”

“Sire, it is the first time such a thing has occurred, and——”

“And to avoid its recurrence, you will join the King of Würtemberg’s army, and I hope you’ll give the Germans lessons in sobriety.”

General Vandamme withdrew, greatly chagrined, and had to join the Würtemberg army forthwith, where he distinguished himself by his prodigious bravery. After the campaign he returned to the Emperor, his breast covered with decorations, and he brought a letter from the King of Würtemberg to the Emperor, who, after reading it, said to Vandamme, “General, don’t forget that, if I like brave fellows, I do not like those who sleep when I am

waiting for them." He shook hands with the General, and invited him and General Chardon to breakfast, the latter being as delighted as his friend at his return to favour.

Before entering Augsburg, the Emperor, who had started in advance, made such a long journey without stopping that his servants could not catch up with him. He spent the night without suite or baggage in the least ill-conditioned house of an extremely ill-conditioned village. When, next day, we reached His Majesty, he laughingly threatened to hand us over to the police as deserters. From Augsburg the Emperor proceeded to the camp at Ulm and made his dispositions for the attack on that place.

Some short distance from the town a furious encounter took place between the French and the Austrians, which lasted two hours. All at once one heard cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" This cry, which always struck terror to our enemies while it gave new courage to our soldiers, electrified these to such a pitch of enthusiasm that they promptly routed the Austrians. The Emperor rode in the front rank, crying "Forward!" and making signs to his men to advance. From time to time His Majesty's horse disappeared in the cannon-smoke. During this furious charge the Emperor happened to be close to a grenadier who was dangerously wounded. The

brave fellow, however, joined in the cry of "Forward! Forward!" The Emperor, approaching him, threw his military cloak over him, and said, "Try and bring that back to me, and in exchange I'll give you the cross which you have just won." The grenadier, who felt that he was mortally wounded, replied that the shroud he had just received was quite equal to any decoration, and, wrapped thus in the Emperor's cloak, he soon afterwards expired. When the battle was over, the Emperor caused the dead grenadier to be removed (he was one of the Egyptian veterans), and subsequently buried in that very cloak.

Another soldier, no less courageous than the one just mentioned, also received marks of honour from His Majesty. The day after the battle of Ulm, the Emperor was visiting the ambulance waggons, when a gunner of artillery, who had lost a leg, cried out with all his might, "Vive l'Empereur!" His Majesty went up to the soldier and said to him, "Is that all you have to say to me?" "No, Sire; I can also tell you that I myself spiked four of the Austrian guns, and it is the pleasure of seeing them smashed which now makes me forget that I shall soon have to shut my eyes for ever." Touched by such fortitude, the Emperor gave his cross to the gunner, asked the name of his parents, and said to him, "If you get over this, you shall be at the Invalides."

"Thank you, Sire; but I have lost a deal of blood. My pension shan't cost you much; I see that I've got to go to the guard-room; but never mind that: 'Vive l'Empereur!'" The poor fellow's presentiment as to his condition was only too true; he did not survive the amputation of his thigh.

After the occupation of Ulm, we followed the Emperor thither, where we saw the enemy's army (over thirty thousand men) lay down their arms at His Majesty's feet, as they filed past him. I have never witnessed any sight more imposing than this. The Emperor was on horseback, a few paces in front of his staff. His face was calm and grave, but one could see how pleased he really was at such a triumph. He kept raising his hat every moment when returning the salute of the Austrian officers.

When the Imperial Guard entered Augsburg, eighty grenadiers marched at the head of the columns, each bearing one of the enemy's standards. On reaching Munich, the Emperor was received with every honour by the Elector of Bavaria, his ally. His Majesty went out shooting several times, as well as to the theatre, and he gave a State concert. As it afterwards transpired, it was during Napoleon's stay at Munich that the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia swore, upon the tomb of Frederick II., to join issue against His Majesty. A year later, the

Emperor also paid a visit to the great Frederick's tomb.

The capture of Ulm brought about the defeat of the Austrians, and opened to the Emperor the gates of Vienna; but the Prussians were advancing by forced marches to the help of their allies. His Majesty prepared to encounter them, and, on the 1st of December, the two hostile armies met face to face. By one of those strange coincidences, designed, as it were, for the Emperor, the day of the battle of Austerlitz was also the anniversary of His Majesty's coronation.

I do not know how it was that at Austerlitz no tent was provided for the Emperor. However, the soldiers built up a sort of hut for him with branches, with a hole in the roof to let out the smoke. As a bed, His Majesty had only straw, yet he was so tired on the eve of the battle, having spent the whole day in the saddle, on the Santon heights, that, when General Savary, one of the aides-de-camp, came in to report himself, His Majesty was fast asleep, and the General had to touch him on the shoulder in order to wake him. Then he rose, and rode off to inspect his outposts. The night was dark, yet suddenly the whole camp was lighted up as by magic. Each soldier stuck a handful of straw on the tip of his bayonet, and, in less time than it takes to record the fact, all these

impromptu torches were alight. The Emperor rode along the lines, addressing those men whom he happened to recognise.

"My brave fellows," quoth he, "be to-morrow what you have always been, and the Prussians are ours—we've got them!"

The air resounded with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" and there was not an officer nor a private but felt certain that victory awaited them on the morrow.

When visiting the lines, where for over forty-eight hours no rations had been served out, the Emperor, as he passed from bivouac to bivouac, noticed some of the soldiers baking potatoes in the ashes. His Majesty took up one of the potatoes and began to eat it, saying to a grenadier, "How do you like these roast pigeons?"

"H'm, well, they're better than nothing, but these sort of pigeons are but Lenten fare, you know!"

"Never mind, my boy," rejoined the Emperor, "you help me to thrash those b——s yonder, and we'll spend our Shrove Tuesday in Vienna." •

The Emperor then came back, lay down and slept till three o'clock in the morning. The servants in attendance lay round a bivouac fire, close to the Emperor's quarters; we were wrapped up in our cloaks, for the night was extremely cold. For four

days I had never closed my eyes, and I was just dropping off to sleep when, about three o'clock, the Emperor asked me to get him some punch. Oh! I would have given the whole Austrian Empire for just another hour's sleep! However, I made the punch over the bivouac fire and took it to His Majesty. He made Marshal Berthier have some, too, and I and my fellow-servants finished the remainder. Between four and five o'clock the Emperor gave the preliminary orders for the army to move, and instantly everyone was afoot and at his post. Aides-de-camp and staff-officers galloped hither and thither in all directions; and at daybreak the battle began. I will not give any details concerning this glorious day, which, as the Emperor himself said, "ended the campaign by a thunder-clap." Not one of His Majesty's combinations failed, and in a few hours the French were masters of the field, and, indeed, of the whole of Germany. Brave General Rapp was wounded at Austerlitz, as he was in every battle in which he ever took part. He was removed to the castle of Austerlitz. The Emperor went there to visit him and have a chat, spending the night at this castle.

Two days afterwards the Emperor Francis came to His Majesty and sued for peace. A treaty was signed before the end of December, after which the Emperor's faithful allies, the Elector of



Bavaria and the Duke of Würtemberg, were made kings. In return, for such promotion, of which he was the sole author, the Emperor asked for the hand of the Princess Augusta Amelia of Bavaria, which he bestowed upon the Viceroy of Italy, Prince Eugene.

During his stay at Vienna the Emperor established his headquarters at Schönbrunn, a place famous on account of His Majesty's repeated visits, and which to-day, by a strange chance, happens to be the residence of his son. I cannot be certain if it was during his first stay at Schönbrunn that the Emperor had the extraordinary encounter which I am about to relate. His Majesty rode out every day, wearing the uniform of a colonel of Chasseurs de la Garde. Riding once along the Vienna high-road he noticed an open carriage approaching, in which were a priest, and a woman sobbing bitterly, who did not recognise him. Napoleon went up to the carriage, bowed to the lady and enquired the cause of her grief and the object of her journey. "Sir," replied she, "I live in a village about two leagues off, and my house has been sacked by your soldiers and my gardener killed. I am going to ask your Emperor to protect me, for he knew my family well and was once under great obligations to them."

"Pray, what is your name, madam?"

“De Bunny. I am a daughter of M. de Marboeuf, formerly governor of Córstica.”

“I am delighted, madam, to have an opportunity of being of service to you,” said Napoleon. “I am the Emperor.”

At this, Madame de Bunny was wholly taken aback. Napoleon reassured her and went on his way, telling her to go to headquarters and await his return. When he came back he received her with the utmost kindness, gave her as escort a detachment of chasseurs, and sent her home contented and happy.

As soon as the battle of Austerlitz was won the Emperor hastened to despatch the courier, Moustache, in order to acquaint the Empress with the news. Her Majesty was then at Saint-Cloud. It was nine o'clock in the evening when suddenly loud cries of joy were heard and the clatter of horse's hoofs, together with the cracking of a whip, which told of the arrival of a courier. The Empress was eagerly waiting for news of the army, and, rushing to the window, flung it open. The words, “Victory” and “Austerlitz” reached her ear. Anxious to learn details, she ran downstairs, followed by her ladies-in-waiting, when Moustache told her the glorious news and handed her the Emperor's letter. After reading it Josephine drew a splendid diamond ring from her finger and gave it to the courier. Poor

Moustache had ridden at full gallop for over fifty leagues of the journey, and so exhausted was he that they had to lift him out of the saddle. It took four men to do this, who carried him straight to bed. His last horse, that doubtless he had spared less than the others, dropped down dead in the castle courtyard.

## CHAPTER III

*The Emperor's return to Paris—An adventure on the way—Mademoiselle de Lajolais—Her petition rejected—She importunes me at Saint-Cloud—I tell the Empress—Josephine's fears—Mademoiselle de Lajolais again approaches the Emperor—Harrowing scene—Generals Wolff and Lavalette take her back to her father—Interview between father and daughter—Mademoiselle de Lajolais obtains her mother's pardon—She joins with the Breton ladies—Young Destrem intercedes for his father—The Emperor at Saint-Cloud again—M. Barré, the Mayor—The inscription and how it was parodied—M. de Talleyrand objects to the beds at Saint-Cloud—Strange caprice of the Emperor—A little revolution at the château.*

AFTER leaving Stuttgardt, the Emperor only stopped twenty-four hours at Carlsruhe and forty-eight hours at Strasburg. From there to Paris he only made short stops, though he did not hurry overmuch nor exact extra speed from the postillions, as was his wont. While we were going up the slopes of Meaux, and the Emperor, busy with a book, was not paying any attention to other things, a girl suddenly rushed up to the carriage-window, jumped on to the step, and, despite the efforts of the escort to keep her back, scrambled into the Emperor's carriage. It was done in a moment. Greatly sur-

prised, the Emperor exclaimed, "What the deuce does this mad woman want with me?" Then, recognising the girl, after a closer scrutiny of her features, he added, with marked vexation, "Oh! it's you again, is it? So you are never going to leave me alone, eh?" The girl, unabashed by so rude a reception, burst into tears, and said that all she begged was that her father might be removed to another prison, from the Château d'If, where the damp was killing him, to the citadel of Strasburg. "No, no," cried the Emperor, "do not count upon that. I have plenty of things to do besides receiving visits from you. If I granted this request, in a week's time you would have invented some other petition." The poor girl implored him with a persistence worthy of better success, but the Emperor was inflexible. On reaching the top of the hill he said to the girl, "I hope that you will now get out and let me continue my journey. I am very sorry, but you ask of me what is impossible." And he forthwith took leave of her without listening further to her entreaties.

While all this was going on I had ascended the hill on foot, a few paces behind His Majesty's carriage, and when the painful scene was over, the girl—obliged to go without having obtained anything—passed in front of me, sobbing. I at once recognised her as Mademoiselle de Lajolais, whom I had already seen under similar circumstances, but

whose courageous affection for her parents had before been more successful.

General de Lajolais, with all his family, had been arrested on the 18th Fructidor. After twenty-eight months' imprisonment he was tried by court-martial at Strasburg, at the command of the First Consul, and unanimously acquitted.

Later on, when the conspiracy of Generals Pichegru, Moreau, George Cadoudal, de Polignac and de Riviere was discovered, General de Lajolais, who had a share in it, was, with them, sentenced to death. His wife and daughter were removed from Strasburg to Paris by the gendarmerie. Madame de Lajolais was placed in close confinement, and her daughter, being separated from her, took refuge with friends of the family. It was then that this young person, hardly fourteen years old, displayed courage and force of character unknown at so tender an age. When she heard that her father was sentenced to death, she set out at four o'clock in the morning, on foot, quite alone, without a guide or introducer, and presented herself at Saint-Cloud, where the Emperor then was. It was not without much difficulty that she managed to effect an entry, but she let herself be baulked by no obstacle, and at last got as far as myself. "Sir," said she, "they have promised me that you will at once take me to the Emperor; this is the only favour that I ask of you.

Do not refuse it, I implore you." Her trustfulness and her despair touched me, and I went to tell the Empress, who was greatly affected at the determination and the grief of so young a child. Yet Her Majesty was unable to help her there and then; she feared to rouse the Emperor's anger, which was great against all those who had had a hand in the conspiracy. The Empress bade me tell Mademoiselle de Lajolais that she was grieved not to be able to help her at the moment, but that she was to come back to Saint-Cloud the next day, at five o'clock in the morning, and that Her Majesty and Queen Hortense would devise some plan of placing her in the Emperor's way. Next day, at the appointed time, the girl returned, when the Empress placed her in the Green Drawing-room. There for ten hours she watched for the moment when the Emperor, quitting the council chamber, passed through this room on the way to his study.

The Empress and her daughter gave orders for breakfast and dinner to be served to the girl, and they themselves came to beg her to take some food, but their entreaties were futile. The poor child had but one thought and one need—this was to save her father's life. At length, about five o'clock in the afternoon, the Emperor appeared; at a given sign, Mademoiselle de Lajolais sprang forward, and then a most distressing scene ensued. Clinging to

the Emperor's knees, the girl besought him, in the most heartrending accents, to spare her father's life. The Emperor at first repulsed her, saying severely, "Your father is a traitor; it is the second time that he has been guilty of treason. I cannot grant anything." To this Mademoiselle de Lajolais replied, "The first time my father was tried and declared to be innocent; this time I implore you to pardon him!" At last, overcome by such courage and devotion, and worn out by the girl's persistency, the Emperor yielded to her entreaties and General de Lajolais' life was spared.

Worn out by suspense and hunger, the girl sank down fainting at the Emperor's feet. He raised her up himself, and saw that she was attended to; then, introducing her to those who had witnessed this trying scene, he warmly commended her for her filial piety. His Majesty at once gave orders for her being taken back to Paris, and several staff-officers eagerly offered their services as escort. General Wolff, aide-de-camp to Prince Louis, and General Lavalette, were entrusted with this mission, and they conducted her to her father at the Conciergerie. On entering his cell she flung her arms round his neck, eager to tell him how she had obtained his pardon, but so great was her emotion that she could not utter a single word, and General Lavalette had to inform the prisoner of all that he owed to



his daughter's courage and persistence. Next day, through the Empress Josephine, she obtained the freedom of her mother, who had been sentenced to transportation.

Having thus saved her father from death and secured her mother's freedom, Mademoiselle de Lajolais made further efforts to save their companions, who had also been condemned to suffer the death-penalty. She joined issue with certain Breton ladies, her success having prompted them to ask her help; and with them she hastened to La Malmaison to implore further pardon. These ladies had managed to get the execution postponed for a couple of hours, hoping that the Empress Josephine might induce the Emperor to relent. But he was inflexible; thus this generous attempt failed. Mademoiselle de Lajolais returned to Paris, full of grief that she could not save the unfortunate delinquents from the rigours of the law.

Two things I have already stated, and I feel bound to repeat them here. In the first place, I intend to record events without regard to their chronological sequence, but as I happen to remember them. In the second place, I consider it an obligation and a duty to narrate all the Emperor's acts which may help to let others know him better, acts which, involuntarily or by design, have been forgotten by his biographers. I may, possibly, be

accused of monotony, or of writing a mere panegyric, but if so, I say: I pity anyone who is bored at the recital of noble deeds! I have pledged myself to tell the truth about the Emperor, recounting the bad with the good; thus, if in these Memoirs any reader expects to find nothing but what is bad about the Emperor, or merely what is good, he will do well not to read further, for I am firmly resolved to tell all that I know. It is not my fault if the Emperor's generous acts were so many in number that my narrative seems to be one long string of praises.

I deemed it expedient to make these brief observations before telling of another of the Emperor's gracious acts, which the adventure of Mademoiselle de Lajolais brings back to my mind.

The day of the first distribution of the Legion of Honour, just as this imposing ceremony had come to a close and the Emperor was about to retire, a young man flung himself upon his knees at the foot of the throne, exclaiming, "Pardon, pardon, for my father!" "What is your father's name?" asked the Emperor. "Sire," replied the young man, in so low a tone as to be hardly heard, "he is pretty well known, and his enemies have done their best to traduce him to Your Majesty, but I swear to you that he is innocent. I am the son of Hugues Destrem."

“Your father, sir, gravely compromised himself by his intimacy with incorrigible rebels ; yet your request shall have my attention. M. Destrem is fortunate in having so devoted a son.” His Majesty then added a few words of consolation, and the young man withdrew, feeling certain that his father would be pardoned. Unfortunately, such pardon came too late. M. Hugues Destrem, who, after the attempt of the 3rd Nivôse (in which he had taken no part), had been removed to the island of Oléron, died there in exile, before the news of his son’s successful intercession could reach him.

Upon our return from the glorious victory of Austerlitz, the commune of Saint-Cloud, specially favoured as it was by the stay there of the Court, resolved to distinguish itself on so memorable an occasion, and give proof of its affection for the Emperor.

The Mayor of Saint-Cloud was M. Barré, a man both highly educated and extremely worthy. He enjoyed Napoleon’s particular esteem. The Emperor liked conversing with him, and, when death took him, his colleagues deeply regretted their loss. M. Barré caused a triumphal arch to be erected at the bottom of the avenue leading to the palace. Of simple design, it was yet handsome and tasteful, and bore the following inscription :

TO ITS BELOVED SOVEREIGN  
FROM  
THE HAPPIEST OF COMMUNES.

The evening that the Emperor was expected, the Mayor and his subordinates, primed with the inevitable address, spent part of the night at the foot of this arch. M. Barré, being old and ailing, at length withdrew, but not without leaving, as sentinel, a representative who was to apprise him of the Emperor's arrival. A ladder had been placed across the triumphal arch, so that no one might pass under it before His Majesty. Alas! this civil sentinel soon fell fast asleep. Towards morning the Emperor arrived and drove past on one side of the triumphal arch, laughing heartily at the obstacle which prevented him from enjoying the notable honour that these worthy inhabitants of Saint-Cloud had prepared for him.

That same day, a little sketch was circulated in the palace, representing the municipal authorities slumbering peacefully at the base of the triumphal arch. Nor was the obstructing ladder omitted, underneath being written, "l'arc barré"—a pun upon the name of the Mayor. As for the inscription, it was parodied thus:

TO ITS BELOVED SOVEREIGN  
FROM  
THE SLEEPYEST OF COMMUNES.

At such pleasantry Their Majesties were mightily amused.

The Court being at Saint-Cloud, the Emperor, after transacting business until a late hour with M. de Talleyrand, invited the latter to sleep at the château. Talleyrand, who preferred going back to Paris, declined, his excuse being that the beds had a most disagreeable smell. This was, however, not the case, for, as may well be believed, the furniture was always most carefully looked after, in the lowest as in the highest apartments of the Imperial Palace. This was a mere chance excuse of M. de Talleyrand's; he might equally well have invented some other one. Nevertheless, the Emperor was struck by his remark, and on retiring to his room that night he complained that his bed had a bad smell. I assured him to the contrary, declaring that next day His Majesty would perceive that he was mistaken. Yet, far from being persuaded, the Emperor, on rising, repeated that his bed had a most disagreeable smell, and that it must be entirely changed. M. Charvet, the head porter, was instantly summoned, to whom the Emperor complained of his bed, and gave orders for another to be brought. M. Desmasis, keeper of the furniture, was also called; he examined the mattress, feather-bed and counterpane. These both he and others turned over and over again, all being convinced that

there was no odour whatever about His Majesty's bed. However, the Emperor insisted that it smelt horribly, and that it must be changed. Seeing that there was nothing for it but to obey, I sent the bedding to the Tuileries, getting back the Paris bed in exchange. The Emperor praised this arrangement, and on his return to the Tuileries never noticed the alteration, but thought that his bed there was excellent. What was funnier still, the Court ladies, hearing that the Emperor had complained of his bed, began to say that theirs had an unbearable smell also. Everything had to be turned upside down, and quite a little revolution ensued. Sovereigns' caprices, as it seems, partake of the nature of an epidemic,

## CHAPTER IV

*Secret intrigues of the Emperor—A virtuous man, according to Napoleon—His conception of immorality—The Emperor's discretion—Josephine's jealousy—Madame Gazani—Meeting in M. de Bourrienne's old rooms—The Empress's suspicions—Her agitation—I am obliged to tell a lie—A fit of the sulks—Duration of the Emperor's intrigue—Nocturnal escapade of Josephine and Madame de Rémusat—Prince Murat and I on duty outside ——'s door—Proposals made to me by certain ladies—My dislike of such traffic in females—Mademoiselle E., the reader—Her visit to the Tuileries—Its consequences—Birth of an Imperial infant—Its education—Mademoiselle E. at Fontainebleau—The Emperor's annoyance—His severity towards the mother—His affection for her son—His three sons—The Emperor's amusements at Boulogne—The fair Italian—Mademoiselle L. B.—Mademoiselle Lenormand, the fortune-teller—Her nonsensical predictions.*

HIS MAJESTY used to say that one might know a virtuous man by the way he treated his wife, his children, and his servants, and I hope that from these Memoirs it will be seen that in this respect the Emperor, from his point of view, behaved

like a virtuous man. In fact, he used to affirm that immorality was a monarch's most dangerous vice, for he had to make laws for his subjects. Doubtless by "immorality" he meant being found out—scandalous publicity given to intrigues which ought to be kept secret. As for the intrigues themselves, if they happened to come in his way he thought no more about them than anybody else. Indeed, anyone else, placed in his position, surrounded by allurements, attacks, and advances of all sorts, might probably have less frequently withstood temptation. God knows that I have no wish to defend the Emperor in this respect; I will even admit, if need be, that his conduct scarcely matched the morality which he preached. But it will be conceded, I fancy, that it was much for a Sovereign to conceal, as he sedulously did, all his little amusements from the public, so that they might have no grounds for scandal, or, what is worse, imitation, and also from his wife, who would have been deeply grieved. Concerning this delicate subject, let me cite three or four instances.

The Empress Josephine was of a jealous disposition, and, in spite of the prudence shown by the Emperor in his secret amours, she sometimes got to know of what was going on.

In Genoa, the Emperor made the acquaintance



of Madame Gazani, the daughter of an Italian dancer, and he continued to receive visits from her in Paris. One day, when he had an assignation with this lady in one of the smaller apartments, he told me to remain in his room and tell all those who wanted to see him, and even Her Majesty the Empress, that he was at work with a minister in his study.

The meeting-place chosen was M. de Bourrienne's old rooms, the staircase of which led to the Emperor's bedroom. . This apartment was very simply furnished. There was another exit on to the staircase, called the black staircase, because it was badly lighted and gloomy. Madame Gazani came in by this way, and the Emperor used the other entrance. A few moments after they had met, the Empress entered the Emperor's room and asked me what her husband was doing. "Madam, the Emperor is very busy just now in his study with a minister."

• "Constant, I wish to go in."

"That is impossible, madam; I have the Emperor's strict orders not to disturb him, not even for Her Majesty the Empress."

Hereupon she went back, looking very much put out and cross. In half an hour she returned and repeated her request, while I could but repeat my answer. I was grieved to note Her Majesty's distress, but I could not fail in my duty towards

my master. That same evening, on going to bed, the Emperor, in most severe tones, told me that the Empress had been informed by me, when coming to inquire, that he was closeted with a lady.

No whit disconcerted, I replied that I felt sure that the Emperor would never believe such a thing as that. "No," added His Majesty, adopting the friendly tone which he was always wont to use when speaking to me, "I know you well enough to be able to rely upon your discretion. But woe betide those gossiping idiots, if I find out who they are!"

The next night, the Empress came in just as the Emperor was getting into bed, when he said to her, in my presence, "It's too bad, Josephine, to tell such lies about poor Constant; he's not the sort of fellow to invent a tale such as you told me." The Empress sat down on the edge of the bed, and laughingly placed her pretty little hand over her husband's mouth. As they were talking about me, I withdrew. The Empress subsequently treated me with coldness and severity, but so foreign to her was such demeanour that she soon resumed her gracious ways, which never failed to win all hearts. With regard to the Emperor's intrigue with Madame Gazani, it lasted nearly a year, but their meetings were at long intervals.

Madame de Rémusat, the Empress's favourite lady-in-waiting, one evening found her mistress greatly agitated and in tears. She waited until the Empress condescended to acquaint her with the cause of such violent grief. She had not long to wait, for Her Majesty at once exclaimed, "I am sure that he is now in bed with a woman."

"My dear friend," she continued, sobbing, "take this candle, and we'll go and listen at his door. We shall be able to hear what's going on."

Madame de Rémusat endeavoured to dissuade her from such a plan, urging the lateness of the hour, the gloom of the passage, and the risk of being caught. Yet all was in vain. The Empress, handing her the candle, said, "You must come with me; if you are afraid, I'll walk in front of you." Madame de Rémusat obeyed, and thus the two ladies went along the corridor on tiptoe, groping their way by the light of one flickering flame. On reaching the door of the Emperor's ante-chamber they stopped, half afraid to draw breath; and the Empress softly turned the door-handle. However, just as she was about to enter, Roustan, who slept in this room, snored in most appalling fashion. The ladies never expected to find him there, and, imagining she saw him leap out of bed, sword and pistol in hand, Madame de Rémusat turned round and ran away as fast as she could, carrying the candle

and leaving the Empress behind in total darkness. She did not get her breath until she had reached the Empress's apartments, and not till then did she recollect that she had left her Royal mistress alone in the dark corridors. She had set out again to find the Empress when she saw the latter coming back holding her sides with laughing, and entirely cured of all her grief by this absurd adventure. Madame de Rémusat attempted to make excuses. "My dear friend," said the Empress, "that pig of a Roustan gave me such a fright, that I should have set you the example by running away, too, if you had not been rather more of a coward than I was."

I cannot tell what these ladies might have discovered if their courage had not failed them halfway. Probably nothing at all, for the Emperor very rarely let the person of whom he was enamoured at the moment visit him in his apartments at the Tuileries. During the Consulate we have seen that he used to make appointments at a little house in the Allée des Veuves, and when he became Emperor his amorous interviews still took place outside the palace. He would go to these, *incognito*, at night-time, ready to run all the risks of any other lucky Lothario.

On one occasion, when close upon midnight, the Emperor sent for me, asked for a black frock coat and a round hat, and ordered me to follow him.

Prince Murat made a third, and we all got into a sombre-coloured coach, the driver being Cæsar, who, like the footman, was not in livery. After a short drive the Emperor stopped in the Rue de ——. He got out, knocked at a door, and went in by himself. The Prince and I remained in the carriage. Hours passed, and we began to grow uneasy. The Emperor's life had so often been threatened that it was only natural for us to feel apprehensive of some fresh stratagem or plot. Spurred by such fears as these, imagination soon runs riot. Prince Murat vehemently cursed both the Emperor's imprudence and his gallantry, as well as the lady who was so complacent. I felt quite as anxious as he did, but, being calmer than he, I sought to pacify him. At last, unable to check his impatience any longer, the Prince jumped out of the carriage, and had just grasped the door-knocker when the Emperor came out. It was already broad daylight. The Prince explained how anxious we had both been, and what fears we had entertained for his safety. "What childish nonsense!" replied the Emperor. "What was there to be frightened about? Don't you know that wherever I go I am in my own home?"

Certain of the Court *habitués* were only too eager to introduce young, pretty girls to the Emperor; but this they did entirely of their own accord, as the Emperor was far from giving them commissions of

this sort. I myself was not fine gentleman enough to deem such business honourable; nor would I ever be mixed up in matters of this kind. It was not my fault if I was occasionally sounded, or even openly solicited, by certain ladies who aspired to the rank of favourite, albeit such a title carried with it but few rights and privileges. However, I declined to have any hand in such bargains, but concerned myself solely with the duties of my position; and though it pleased His Majesty to revive the gay customs of the old monarchy, the head valet got none of the perquisites attaching thereto, and was far from wishing to claim these. Many others, not valets, were less scrupulous than myself. General L. once spoke to the Emperor about a very pretty girl, whose mother kept a gambling saloon, and who wished to be introduced to the Emperor. He received her once only, and a few days afterwards she was married. Later on, His Majesty desired to renew his acquaintance, and sent for the young wife, who said that she was no longer her own mistress, and refused all offers and invitations. The Emperor, seemingly, was not at all displeased; on the contrary, he commended Madame D. for her chaste, faithful conduct.

In 1804 the Princess Murat had a young reader in her house, a Mademoiselle E. She was about seventeen, tall, lithe and shapely—a brunette with

fine dark eyes. She was a great flirt. Certain folk, who thought it in their interest to separate the Emperor from his wife, were pleased to see this girl making eyes at His Majesty, and to watch the effect of her wiles. Adroitly they added fuel to the flame; one individual, indeed, undertook to act as diplomatist. Certain proposals made by a third party were instantly accepted. The fair Mademoiselle E. came in secret to the château, but on rare occasions, and only stayed for two or three hours at a time. She became pregnant. The Emperor took rooms for her in the Rue Chantierine, where she gave birth to a fine boy, who was dowered with an income of 30,000 francs. The child was at first entrusted to the care of Madame L., nurse to Prince Achille Murat, who had charge of it for three or four years. Then Monsieur M., secretary to His Majesty, undertook its education. When the Emperor returned from the Isle of Elba, Mademoiselle E.'s son was taken care of by Her Majesty the Empress. The Emperor's intrigue with this young lady did not last long. Once, when the Court was at Fontainebleau, she arrived there with her mother. Coming upstairs to His Majesty's apartments, she asked me to announce her. At this proceeding the Emperor was extremely angry, and he ordered me to tell Mademoiselle E. never to come and visit him without his permission, and to leave Fontainebleau there and

then. Despite such harshness towards the mother, the Emperor was devotedly fond of the son. I often took the child to him, when he petted it and gave it quantities of sweetmeats, being delighted at the boy's vivacity and his replies, which were very clever considering his age. This child, that of the fair Pole (I shall mention her later on), and the King of Rome were the only ones which the Emperor had. He never had any daughters, nor do I think that this was his desire.

I noticed somewhere the statement that during our longest stay at Boulogne, the Emperor, after a hard day's work, used to solace himself at night-time with a handsome Italian girl. This is what I know of the affair. One morning, as I was dressing him, Prince Murat being present, the Emperor complained that there were only mustachioed faces to be seen, which he declared was most depressing. Always ready to offer his services in an emergency of this kind, the Prince spoke to his brother-in-law of a handsome, clever Genoese girl, who was most anxious to see His Majesty. The Emperor laughingly agreed to grant her a private interview, and this message Prince Murat undertook to deliver. At his instigation the lady duly arrived, and took apartments in the town. The Emperor's quarters were at Pont de Briques, and, one evening, he ordered me to take a carriage, and fetch Prince



Murat's *protégée*. I obeyed, and soon returned with the fair Genoese, who, to avoid scandal, though the night was dark, had to be brought in through a little garden at the back of His Majesty's apartments. The poor girl showed much emotion, and wept, but by her kindly reception was speedily consoled. The interview lasted until three o'clock in the morning, when I was fetched and told to escort the lady to her home. She came again five or six times, and also saw the Emperor at Rambouillet. She was good-natured, simple, credulous, and not the least intriguing, never trying to derive profit from an intimacy which, at the best, was but a transient one.

Another of those favourites who used to jump headlong, as it were, into the Emperor's arms before he had even time to salute them, was Mademoiselle L. B., a charmingly pretty, clever and good-hearted girl. Had her education been less frivolous than it was, she would, doubtless, have become a most estimable woman. But I have every reason to believe that the mother, a widow, made use of her daughter's youth and attractions in order to secure a protector for herself. I do not recollect his name, but he was of noble family, at which both mother and daughter were delighted. The girl was a good musician, and sang agreeably; but what struck me as both ridiculous and indecent, was to

see her dance before company like a ballet-girl, in a costume almost as airy as that worn by opera *coryphées*, playing castanets, or a tambourine, and finishing up her dance by a lot of attitudes and postures. Brought up like this, she must have found her equivocal position a most natural one; moreover, great was her chagrin at the short duration of her amour with the Emperor. As for the mother, she was in despair, saying to me, with revolting ingenuousness, "Look at my poor Lise, how flushed are her cheeks! That's because she feels that she's neglected, dear child! It would be so good of you if you could get the Emperor to send for her!" In order to obtain an interview, for which mother and daughter were alike so anxious, they came to the chapel at Saint-Cloud, and, during mass, "poor Lise" made such eyes at the Emperor that all the young ladies present blushed. It was all in vain, however; the Emperor never took the slightest notice.

Colonel L. B. was aide-de-camp to General L., governor of Saint-Cloud. The General was a widower; this fact might possibly excuse the intimacy of his only daughter with the L. B.'s, at which I was much surprised. One day, when I was dining with the Colonel and his wife, the General sent for his aide-de-camp, and I was left alone with the ladies, who pressed me to accompany

them to Mademoiselle Lenormand's. It would have been ungracious of me to refuse. We took a carriage, and drove to the Rue de Tournon. Mademoiselle L. B. went first into the sibyl's grotto, and stopped there a long while, being discreetly silent as to all that had been told her. Mademoiselle L. ingenuously declared that she had heard good news, and was soon going to marry the one she loved. This, in fact, happened not long afterwards. The ladies then begged me to consult the prophetess in my turn, and I soon saw that I was known, for Mademoiselle Lenormand, looking at my hand, at once said that I had the good fortune to be near a great man, who was attached to me. Then she added a deal of other nonsense in the same strain, for which I thanked her as quickly as possible, being bored by such stuff.

## CHAPTER V

*Thrones of the Imperial family—Rupture of the treaty with Prussia—The Queen of Prussia and the Duke of Brunswick—Departure from Paris—A hundred and fifty thousand men routed in a few days—Death of Prince Louis of Prussia—Constant's carriage upset—The Emperor at Weimar—His life in danger—The Emperor flat on his face—The Emperor compliments the soldier—Flight of the King and Queen of Prussia—The Amazon Queen reviews her army—Her costume—She is pursued by two French Hussars and Klein's Dragoons—Constant in the Emperor's tent—He shares his bed with the King of Naples—The Emperor's abstinence—He is overcome by fatigue—His hard work before a battle—On the road to Potsdam—The Emperor at Charlottenburg—The army enters Berlin—Military honours for Frederick the Great—The Emperor's consideration for the King of Prussia's sister—Grand review—Two women present a petition—Constant entrusted with a mission—A petitioner of sixteen—Adventures of the pretty Prussian girl—Constant recommends her to the Emperor—Imperial generosity.*

WHILE among his brothers and sisters the Emperor was distributing crowns—to Prince Louis, the Dutch throne; to Prince Joseph, that of Naples; the Duchy of Berg to Prince Murat; to Princess Elisa, Lucca and Massa-Carrara; and Guastalla to

the Princess Pauline Borghese; while, by domestic alliances and treaties, he was gradually ensuring the co-operation of the various States which had joined the Rhenish Confederation—between France and Prussia war broke out anew. It is not my place to enquire into the causes of this war, nor to say which side first provoked it. All I know is that hundreds of times, at the Tuileries and in the country, I have heard the Emperor declare to his intimates that it was the old Duke of Brunswick and the young, pretty Queen of Prussia who spurred on King Frederick William to break the peace-treaty. According to the Emperor, the Queen was more inclined for bloodshed than even General Blücher himself. She wore the uniform of a regiment which bore her name, appeared at all reviews and directed the manœuvres.

We left Paris at the end of September. I do not purpose to go into the details of this marvellous campaign, in which the Emperor, within the space of a few days, annihilated an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, perfectly disciplined, full of enthusiasm and courage, and zealous to protect their fatherland. In one of the first engagements, young Prince Louis of Prussia, the King's brother, was killed at the head of his troops by Guindé, quartermaster of the 10th Hussars. The Prince and he fought hand to hand, Guindé saying "Yield, Colonel,

or you are a dead man!" Prince Louis' only answer was a sabre-cut, when Guindé ran him through, and he fell dead on the spot.

In this campaign, the roads were so cut up by the continual passage of artillery that my carriage was overturned, and one of the Emperor's hats fell out of the door. A regiment passing along the same road recognised the hat by its peculiar shape, and at once my carriage was lifted up. "No," said the brave soldiers, "that's the Little Corporal's head valet; we won't leave him in the lurch." The hat in question was handed round and examined by all the men, but I got it back before I started. On reaching the plateau of Weimar, the Emperor drew up his army in line of battle, and bivouacked with his guards. About two o'clock he rose, and went on foot to see how the pioneers were getting on with a road that he was having cut in the rock for the transport of artillery. He remained with the workmen for nearly an hour, and, before returning to camp, he thought he would have a look at the nearest outposts. He desired to go alone, without escort of any kind, and the excursion well-nigh cost him his life. The night was very dark, and the sentries could not see ten paces in front of them. The first, hearing footsteps in the gloom approaching our lines, called out, "Who goes there?" and prepared to fire. So preoccupied was the Emperor,

as he afterwards explained, that he did not hear the sentry's challenge and made no reply. The whizz of a bullet is what first roused him from his reverie. Directly he saw in what danger he stood, he flung himself flat upon his stomach, a wise precaution, for, hardly had he done so than other bullets hummed over his head in rapid succession, as all the other sentries followed suit. When the firing ceased, the Emperor, rising, went up to the nearest outpost and made himself known. The man who fired at him was a young grenadier of the line. The Emperor ordered him to approach, and, pinching his cheek hard, said, "So you took me for a Prussian, you rogue, eh? This fine fellow doesn't care to waste powder over sparrows; he only shoots at Emperors!" The poor soldier was much distressed to think that he might have killed the Little Corporal, whom, like all the rest of the army, he adored. With difficulty he managed to blurt out, "Pardon me, Sire, but it was the password; if you did not answer, that wasn't my fault. If you did not mean to answer, that ought to have been made part of the password." The Emperor smilingly reassured him, as he said, "My brave lad, I don't blame you. It was not bad for a snap-shot; but day dawns; and if you aim better than that, I shall not forget you!"

The result of the battle of Jena, fought on the 14th of October, is well known. Almost all the

Prussian generals, certainly all the best of them, were either taken prisoners or killed. The King and Queen fled, never stopping until they reached Koenigsberg.

A few moments before the attack, the Queen of Prussia, mounted on a spirited charger, appeared in the midst of the troops, and all the flower of Prussian chivalry followed in the wake of this intrepid Amazon as she rode along the lines. The standards, embroidered by her fair hands and those of the illustrious Frederick, all grimy with cannon-smoke, were lowered at her approach, while loud cheers re-echoed throughout the ranks. So clear was the air, and the two armies so close to each other, that the French could easily distinguish the dress of the Queen. Her strange attire, indeed, was in a great measure the cause of all the perils that beset her flight. She wore a helmet of polished steel with splendid plumes, and a glittering cuirass of gold and silver, with a tunic to match, red leggings and gold spurs. Such a costume did but enhance her charms.

When the Prussian troops were routed, the Queen remained with three or four young Berlin officers, who managed to protect her until the little group was abruptly dispersed by two hussars, the bravest of the brave in this battle, who, with drawn sabres, rode at them full tilt. Startled by



so sudden an attack, the Queen's horse bolted, thus saving its fair rider from her pursuers, who were bent upon capturing her. More than once, they pressed her so hard that she could hear their gross suggestions, and must have been scandalised by their coarse jests.

Thus chased, the Queen got in sight of the gates of Weimar, when a powerful detachment of Klein's dragoons joined in the pursuit, their leader being charged to capture the Queen at all cost. Hardly had she entered the gates than these were closed, and hussars and dragoons were thus obliged to turn back, baulked of their prize.

The details of this strange pursuit soon reached the Emperor's ears, who summoned the hussars to appear before him. Having in strong terms expressed his anger at the disgusting jokes which they had dared to make about the Queen, whose misfortune, no less than her rank and her sex, should have inspired respect, the Emperor alluded to the courage displayed by the two troopers during the battle, giving to each, as a reward, the cross, and also the sum of three hundred francs.

The Emperor exercised his clemency with regard to the Duke of Weimar, who had commanded one of the Prussian divisions. The day after the battle of Jena, His Majesty, going to Weimar, took up his residence in the Ducal palace, where he was

received by the Duchess-Regent. "Madam," said the Emperor to her, "I am much obliged to you for expecting me; and it is because you had such trust in me that now I pardon your husband."

When with the army, I used to sleep in the Emperor's tent, either on a little carpet or on a bearskin rug which he wrapped round him when driving. When I could not manage to get these, I used to look about for some straw. I remember that one evening I happened to do the King of Naples a great service by sharing with him a truss of hay that formed my bed.

Here are a few details which may give the reader some idea of the way in which my nights during a campaign were spent.

The Emperor slept on his little iron camp-bed, while I lay down anywhere, as best I could. Scarcely had I got to sleep than the Emperor called out, "Constant." "Sire?" "See who is on duty." [He wanted to speak to one of the aides-de-camp.] "Sire, it is Monsieur ——." "Tell him I want to see him." When he came, the Emperor would say, "Go to such-and-such a corps, commanded by Marshal so-and-so; instruct him to place a certain regiment in such-and-such a position. Find out where the enemy is stationed, and then come back and tell me." Off rode the aide-de-camp to execute this commission. I lay

down again, and the Emperor seemingly wished to sleep, too, but in a few moments I heard him call out again, "Constant!" "Sire?" "Go and fetch the Prince of Neufchâtel." I went to tell the Prince, who soon came, and during their conversation I remained at the door of the tent. The Prince, having written certain despatches, retired. Interruptions of this sort occurred several times during the night. Towards morning His Majesty fell asleep, and then I also got a few moments of rest. But upon the return of the aides-de-camp, bringing news for the Emperor, I had to rouse him by a gentle shake.

"What is it?" cried His Majesty, jumping up. "What's the time? Show him in." The aide-de-camp made his report, and, if necessary, His Majesty instantly rose and left the tent. His toilette did not take long. If there was to be a fight, the Emperor looked out at the sky and the horizon; and I often heard him remark, "It's going to be a fine day." Breakfast was prepared and served in five minutes; in ten more, the cloth was cleared. The Prince of Neufchâtel dined and breakfasted every day with his Majesty, and their meal at most never lasted over ten minutes. "To horse!" then cried the Emperor, and he rode off with the Prince of Neufchâtel, a couple of aides-de-camp and Roustan, who always carried a silver flask of

brandy, though the Emperor hardly ever used this. His Majesty went from one corps<sup>f</sup> to another, interviewing the officers, speaking to the men, inspecting everything, questioning everybody. If there was an engagement, dinner was forgotten, and the Emperor had something to eat after it was over. If the fight lasted over long, though he did not ask for it, refreshment in the form of a crust and a little wine was brought to him. The caterer-in-chief, M. Colin, many a time braved the cannon's mouth in order to take this light repast to the Emperor.

After an engagement the Emperor never omitted to visit the battlefield, ministering to the wants of the wounded and encouraging them by kind words. Sometimes he returned thoroughly tired out, took some slight refreshment and lay down until the usual nightly interruptions recommenced. It is worthy of remark that whenever unforeseen circumstances obliged the aides-de-camp to wake the Emperor, he was always just as apt for work as at the beginning or the middle of the day, and when roused was as friendly and good-tempered as ever. And after the aide-de-camp had made his report, Napoleon continued his sleep just as if it had never been broken.

For three or four days before going into action the Emperor spent most of his time poring over

large maps, into which he stuck pins having wax heads of different colours.

I have already stated that all the members of His Majesty's household were ever eager to provide promptly and efficiently for his slightest needs. Everywhere, whether travelling or during a campaign, his table, his coffee, his bed, and even his bath could be got ready at five minutes' notice. How often, too, in less time than that, were we not obliged to remove the corpses of men and horses in order to erect His Majesty's tent.

Somewhere beyond the Rhine, I remember that we halted in a dirty little village, where, as quarters for the Emperor, we had to use an old barn which had served as an ambulance. We had first of all to pick up the amputated limbs that lay about, and wash away the blood-stains. It was all done in less than half an hour, and the place made shipshape.

Occasionally the Emperor slept for half an hour or so on the battlefield, if he was very tired or wished to await the result of orders that he had given.

While on our way to Potsdam we were surprised by a violent storm. So furious was it, and the rain so heavy, that we were forced to take shelter in a house by the wayside. Buttoned-up in his grey overcoat, and never dreaming that anyone would

recognise him, the Emperor was greatly surprised to see a young woman tremble violently when he came in. It was an Egyptian lady, who cherished for my master a sort of religious veneration akin to that felt for him by the Arabs. The widow of an officer in the Egyptian army, chance had brought her to Saxony, to this very house, where she had at once been welcomed. The Emperor granted her a pension of twelve hundred francs, and undertook to provide for the education of her son, the sole legacy left to her by her husband.

"It's the first time," said Napoleon, "that I ever took shelter from a storm. I had a sort of presentiment that there was some good deed for me to do in there."

Our victory at Jena struck terror to the souls of the Prussians. The Court fled in such a hurry that everything in the Royal palaces was left behind. On reaching Potsdam the Emperor found Frederick the Great's sword, his stock, the grand cordon with all his orders, and his alarum clock. These he caused to be sent to Paris and placed at the Invalides. "I prefer such trophies," said His Majesty, "to all the King of Prussia's treasures. I will send them to my old soldiers who fought with me in Hanover; they shall keep them as a record of the Grand Army's victories, and of the revenge for the disaster at Rosbach." The Emperor, that same day, ordered the

removal to Paris of the column erected by Frederick the Great to commemorate the defeat of the French at Rosbach. He might have been content merely to alter the inscription.

Napoleon established his headquarters at the castle of Charlottenburg, and thither the regiments of the Guards flocked from all directions. As soon as they were assembled, they were ordered to parade in full uniform in the little wood outside the town. The Emperor entered the Prussian capital between eleven and twelve in the morning. He was surrounded by his aides-de-camp and staff officers. All the regiments marched past in perfect order, their several bands at their head. By the Prussians the men's smart bearing was much admired. Entering Berlin with the Emperor's suite, we came to the square, in the centre of which stood a bust of Frederick the Great. So popular is this monarch's name in Berlin and throughout Prussia that hundreds of times if in a coffee-house or other public place someone happened to mention it, all those present rose and took off their hats, showing every mark of profound respect, even of adoration. On reaching the bust the Emperor galloped round in a semi-circle, followed by his staff. Lowering the point of his sword, he at the same time took off his hat, and was himself the first to salute the statue. His example was followed by the entire staff, and all the

commanding officers were ranged round the bust. As each regiment filed past, the Emperor ordered the men to present arms. This manœuvre was scarcely relished by certain grumbling old soldiers of the first regiment of the Guard, who, with faces still blackened by the powder of Jena, would have preferred a comfortable billet at some inn instead of having to parade. Nor did they hide their ill-humour, while one in particular, without moving a muscle, muttered between his teeth, as he passed the Emperor, that he did not care a d——n for his b—— bust. The Emperor pretended not to hear; but that evening he laughingly repeated the old soldier's remark.

His Majesty alighted at the château where quarters had been got ready for him, and whither his suite had preceded him. Hearing that the Electoral Princess of Hesse-Cassel, sister to the King, was ill after her confinement, the Emperor went upstairs to the apartments of this Princess, and, after a long visit, gave orders that this lady should be treated with all the deference due to her rank and her unhappy position.

As the Emperor was holding a grand review at Berlin, a girl, accompanied by an aged female, presented a petition. On returning to the palace the Emperor glanced at the paper and said to me, "Here, Constant, just read this and see where the women who gave it me live. You'll have to go



and find out who they are and what they want." I read the petition, and discovered that all the girl desired was to have a private audience of His Majesty.

On going to the address given, I found a charmingly pretty young lady, of about fifteen or sixteen. On speaking to her, I unfortunately discovered that she did not understand a word of Italian or French; and, as I thought of the "interview" for which she asked, I could not help smiling.

The mother, or she who passed as such, spoke a little French, but with great difficulty. However, I managed to discover that she was the widow of a Prussian officer, and that this charming girl was her daughter. "If the Emperor grants my daughter her request," said she, "I shall crave permission to be presented to His Majesty at the same time." I pointed out that, as the audience had been solicited by the daughter only, it seemed to me rather difficult for the mother to be present as well, and this rule of etiquette she thoroughly seemed to understand. After our short interview, I returned to the palace to acquaint the Emperor with the result of it. At ten o'clock that night I went to fetch the two ladies in a carriage, and brought them to the palace. I instructed the mother to wait in an ante-chamber, while I presented the girl to

the Emperor. His Majesty detained her; and I withdrew.

Though the conversation between two persons who could only understand each other by signs can hardly have been very interesting, it lasted, nevertheless, until far into the night. Towards morning, the Emperor, calling me, asked for four thousand francs, which he himself gave to the fair Prussian, who seemed highly delighted. She then rejoined her "mother," who did not appear to be at all uneasy at the length of the interview. The carriage being in readiness, I drove them home.

The Emperor told me that he had never been able to understand anything except "Das ist miserabel" and "Das ist gut"; also that, despite the diversion of a *tête-à-tête* with so pretty a girl, the interview was scarcely to his taste.

A few days after this adventure, I heard that the young lady had been carried off by a French officer, whose name did not transpire. The Emperor seemed quite unconcerned about the fugitives. Some months later, on my return to Paris, I was crossing the Rue de Richelieu, when I was accosted by a female, shabbily dressed, and wearing a large hat, which almost entirely concealed her face. Addressing me by my name, she begged my pardon for stopping me thus in the street. As she raised her head, I recognised the pretty Prussian girl, who

looked as bewitching as ever. Travel had transformed her into a handsome woman, and she spoke French fairly well. This was the story she told me :

“Since you saw me I have been in great trouble. You, doubtless, know that at Berlin I was weak enough to yield to the importunities and the promises of a French colonel. Having for a while kept me in concealment, this officer induced me to follow him, declaring on oath that he would always love me, and that I should soon become his wife. He took me to Paris. I cannot say if, to secure advancement, he counted upon the favour shown to me, as he imagined, by the Emperor.” Here the girl blushed, and her eyes filled with tears. “Yet I could not but suspect him of such shameful speculation, when, one day, he expressed his surprise, almost his discontent, that the Emperor should never have cared to inquire as to my whereabouts. I blamed the colonel for such baseness, when he, to rid himself of me and my reproaches, was cowardly enough to abandon me in a house of ill-fame. Desperate at finding myself in such a foul abode, I made countless efforts to escape, and, at last, I succeeded. As I had still a little money left, I took a small room in the Rue Chabanaïs. But my funds are exhausted, and I am in deep distress. All that I now desire is to return to Berlin. Yet how can I get away from this place ? ” As she uttered these last words, the poor girl burst into tears.

I was really touched to see so young and pretty a woman in such distress, brought to this, moreover, by the vicious ways of others, not by her own guilt; and I promised to lay her sad case before the Emperor. That same evening, in fact, I took advantage of His Majesty's good humour to tell him of my encounter. The Emperor was pleased to hear that the fair Prussian could speak French so nicely, and he seemed half wishful to see her again. But I ventured to suggest that she was now hardly worthy of his attentions, and I told him of the travels and vicissitudes of the poor abandoned girl. My story produced the effect which I anticipated. His Majesty cooled considerably, though he felt real pity for the girl.<sup>f</sup> I was instructed to pay her the sum of two hundred napoleons, so that she might go home to her own country, and never did I more gladly execute such a commission. The pretty Prussian was overjoyed. She loaded me with thanks, and bade me an affectionate farewell. No doubt she went back to Germany, for I have never seen her since.

## CHAPTER VI

[BEING THE SOUVENIRS OF A LADY ATTACHED TO  
THE IMPERIAL PALACE.]

*Birth of the Author—My parents—My husband—My father's wise forecast—General D. with the Army of the North—Carnot's deference towards my father—He saves him from exile—Bernard de Saintes—Arrival of Robespierre the younger at Besançon—How I escaped from Bernard de Saintes—I go to Paris—The danger of castles in Spain—Amusements in Paris after the Terror—First performance of Olympie—The first velvet gown—Rochefoucault's wise maxims—Also those of M. de Ségur—A life of dissipation—I endeavour to secure my husband's recall—My father returns to Paris—His relations with Madame de Staël—This lady's extreme susceptibility—I am presented to her—Madame Necker's axiom—I disagree with it—The dangers of periphrasis.*

IN giving these Memoirs to the public, I cannot venture to suppose that the actual events of my own life will excite attention, but my relations with persons long marked out for public regard may possibly prove interesting owing to certain curious details which I am able to furnish concerning their private life. Thus, if I speak of

myself, my motive for so doing must serve as my excuse. I am desirous that my example may be of some profit to certain young women who enjoy the baneful advantage of their own liberty. May it help to convince them that, in striving for independence, they will only reap disaster !

Nature, in making us weaker than man, wished to let us feel the need of being guided and guarded by the stronger sex.

One of the evils, not by any means the least, of the Revolution, was the isolation of so many young women, brought about by the emigration of their husbands; an isolation which caused them to contract the perilous habit of behaving exactly as they liked.

I was born in a province where my parents held distinguished rank. My father, General D., enjoyed universal esteem, and my mother lives there yet, respected by all.

While still quite young, I was sought in marriage by Baron de V. His parents possessed a large fortune, and this fortune their only son believed to be greater than it really was, which often happens where servants are not sparing of their flattery towards a young master, if he be destined to fill high rank in the world. So confiding, indeed, and so good-natured was he, that he could never refuse anyone a favour, being as ready to oblige a mere

casual acquaintance as to oblige a friend. Of this easy-going nature of his, many persons took unfair advantage, and got him to give his signature, as surety, for very considerable sums. I was too young then for my advice to save my husband from the danger of such excessive kind-heartedness.

Emigration soon took him far away from me. As captain of cavalry he had to follow his regiment. So soon as it became known that he had emigrated, several of the holders of bills, that he had so generously backed, came to see me. They wished me to add my signature to that of my husband; and this I did, after the careless, unforeseeing manner of youth. I thought it would appear disrespectful to Monsieur de V. if I refused to approve that which he had done.

This first imprudent act of mine had disastrous results. My father foresaw the dire consequences of emigration; his sound judgment had calculated these; and thus it was that he endeavoured to keep my husband at home. Sometimes he would say, "You are going away only to come back again; it would be far simpler to stop. He who quits the game, loses it." His advice, however, had no effect.

My father was of those who believed in the possibility of reforming government abuses, yet, ere long, his fine, noble spirit rebelled at the base

methods employed to effect this. His rank and superior talents secured for him a place at the head of the corps of engineers; thus he could not remain, as he would like to have done, in the shade. He was summoned to join the Army of the North, where Breda and Gertrudenberg soon fell into his hands. Having, by the capture of these two important places, opened the gates of Holland, he asked for, and obtained, leave of absence in order to regain his health.

He lived in Paris in great retirement, in the centre of a small circle of friends; soon, however, the troubles of the Revolution served to scatter nearly all of them. At this period, Carnot, who had served under my father, and who admired his genius as much as he respected his noble character, used to come almost every day and discuss with him, in his study, those plans of campaign attributed to him.

My father had believed in the possibility of reforms, and he sincerely desired these, but the means employed were so hateful to him that he left the service. Yet when Carnot came to consult him, and when his advice, by avoiding bloodshed, was able to lead the soldiers on to victory, he stated his opinions as frankly and as ardently as if the cause were one to which he was himself devoted.



Carnot behaved most honourably towards my father, who, quick-tempered and of unswerving principles, often overwhelmed him with reproaches for his political opinions. So hot, indeed, grew their discussions at times, that often, after some stormy interview, my father felt certain that in two hours he would be put under arrest.

Yet this was far from being the case. When the law of the 27th Germinal was passed, banishing the nobles from Paris and elsewhere, my father was getting into his carriage when he saw Carnot hurrying up, who brought him a certificate from the Health Committee (the only method of rendering him exempt). My father thanked him for this; yet, eager to leave Paris at this disastrous epoch, he made no use of it, but withdrew to his estates in the Jura.

While speaking of Carnot, I ought to mention a fact which goes to show that men of talent are often thin-skinned and hypersensitive.

I said just now that most of the plans attributed to Carnot were really the work of my father. The latter, however, was far from being proud of this. If his opinion and advice were asked, he gave these in the candid, straightforward way which from so loyal a nature one might expect. Far from being conceited, however, any mention of this would have annoyed him. Thus I cannot tell how Mallet

du Pan, editor of the Geneva *Merçure*, managed to get knowledge of the matter, unless it were possibly through some indiscretion on my part. At any rate, in this paper the following paragraph appeared :

“All the plans of campaign attributed to General Carnot, and which earned him great honour, are the work of General D.”

Had this fact not been strictly true, it is probable that Carnot would have taken no notice. But true it was, and consequently he was very much distressed—more so than he ought to have been. Ever since that time he could never help letting my father see how susceptible he was upon this point.

At this period, while my father resided in Paris, I lived at B——. This town was in the hands of the Jacobins, who governed it jointly with certain representatives of the people who were sent thither in succession. One of them, Bernard de Saintes, caused the streets to be placarded with long lists of all the relatives of emigrants and suspected persons, ordering these to be imprisoned within the space of three days. As the supply exceeded the demand, three convents had to be transformed into gaols. My mother sought to induce Bernard de Saintes to allow her house to serve as my prison, I having a keeper. We accordingly went to him to ask this favour. He lived in a handsome house which had been built for the former *intendant*. His dress,

which included the vest, then styled "carmagnole," and a red cotton cap, was in strange contrast to the beauty of the apartments in which he received us. He was a man about forty-five years old, whose rough, coarse manners shocked me at first. But ere long he seemed to soften, and let us hope that he would accede to my mother's request, though he did not positively promise to do so. He kept us with him a long while, accompanying us, when we left, to the threshold.

As we came out, my mother and I exchanged glances of surprise and dread, not daring to express our fears; and we were at a loss to explain the sudden transition from downright boorishness to courtesy which certainly left much to be desired. Yet this was in such sharp contrast to the man's demeanour at the outset that it puzzled us not a little. Next day our astonishment gave place to graver fears.

In society I had occasionally met a certain General Viennot, brother of M. de Vaublanc, a Jacobin of the jovial, well-bred sort, who, to put it plainly, was only a Jacobin through fear. His manners differed strangely from those then in vogue; though he vainly strove to adopt the tone of his associates, his good breeding could not be disguised. He took the name of Viennot, not daring to use that of his brother, whose opinions, it was well

known, were totally opposed to those which he now professed.

He never came to our house, so I was much surprised when he called upon us, the day after our interview with Bernard, looking embarrassed, confused, and as if he did not know how to broach the subject which had occasioned his visit.

At last, after certain commonplaces, as to my position, and the dangers which threatened the wives of emigrants, he told me that Bernard, a widower, with several children, wished to marry again; that I had taken his fancy, and that he desired to save me from my perilous position by making me his wife. To me this idea seemed so strange, so mad, that I could not help laughing, as I enquired if the Representative was ignorant that my husband was alive?

“Don’t laugh,” said M. Viennot, sadly; “I have been entrusted with this commission; as I foresaw that you would refuse, and, as I knew all the trouble that such a refusal is likely to bring upon you, your relatives, and, above all, upon your father, now threatened with the guillotine in Paris, I half hoped that I might be able to lessen the severity of the measures which your refusal must necessarily provoke.” The thought of my father imperilled by this ridiculous whim of Bernard’s soon checked my mirth.

Seeing how deeply affected I was, M. Viennot pleaded his evil cause with greater insistence, but I would not allow him to proceed, assuring him that I knew my father too well to imagine that he would wish to purchase his life with his daughter's shame, and declaring that I was prepared for the worst. While he was thus seeking to conquer my resolve, I plainly saw that in his heart of hearts he approved of it.

He returned to give an account of his mission, but I had reason to believe that his report was not a perfectly truthful one, and that he led Bernard de Saintes to hope that he might induce me to change my resolve, for I was allowed to stay at my mother's, and had no keepers, even.

I knew that on the following day Bernard had to leave on a tour of inspection. His absence would last a fortnight; and his departure somewhat increased my chances of security. Twice during this tour he sent M. Briot, who acted as aide-de-camp, to speak to me concerning his love, or rather, his supreme wishes.

This young man, afterwards a member of the Council of Five Hundred, had too much delicacy and tact to constitute himself the interpreter of Bernard's threats. Though he hinted at these, he approved of my conduct, and seemed apprehensive on my account at the Representative's imminent return.

From all such perils I was saved by the arrival of Robespierre junior, sent to this department on a special mission. A courier was at once despatched to Bernard, summoning him to come and justify his conduct, which, on what grounds I know not, had been disapproved of by the Committee of Public Health. He arrived in due course at the Jacobin assembly-room. After a debate which lasted all day and part of the night, he was obliged to relinquish his post in favour of Robespierre. He at once departed; and thus I was relieved of all my anxiety. As already stated, my father left Paris directly the law of the 27th Germinal came into force; and we withdrew to the country, where, fortunately, we were forgotten during the remainder of this epoch of terror.

As soon as it was safe to show oneself, I came up to Paris with the hope of getting the name of Monsieur de V. struck off the emigrant list. Some of my acquaintances, by the sacrifice of a deal of money, had been able to obtain permission to return to France, and I was desirous of employing this means also. My father could not accompany me, as his health was not very good, so I came up to Paris by myself, where I found myself surrounded by society that was wholly new to me, and foreign to my family. My husband's relatives had emigrated.

Married at an early age, and having lived but

a very short time with my husband before he emigrated, I knew little about society and the ways of the world, having withdrawn to the country after his departure. I came back without a single friendly hand to support or protect me, my imagination being vivid, almost fantastic, and my ideas not wholly sage or sound.

Here it seems opportune to tell mothers that with all their might they should check in their daughters the frivolous and dangerous habit of building castles in the air, and of indulging in vague, indefinite, nebulous day-dreams, of which the least drawback is contempt for the actual things of everyday life.

Alas! at this happy age one is easily beguiled by the roseate lights of Hope; yet, if imagination provide pleasures of this sort for the innocent, the harm too frequently outweighs the good. At the time of my return to Paris it was as if the misfortunes which had overcome all classes of society had left behind them a wild thirst for pleasure—as if everyone had been bitten by a tarantula.

Balls were given nightly, and I, being passionately fond of dancing, always attended these.

About this period, the first and only performance of *Olympie*, an inferior opera, was given, at which I was present. I wore a black velvet gown, and quantities of diamonds—a novelty in dress, this, as

since the Revolution ladies never wore velvet; and, to satisfy my caprice, I was at great pains to get some. My most remarkable toilette found great favour with the pit and boxes, nor was aught else needed to make its wearer the fashion. How many members of the society in which I moved, who, till then, had never thought of noticing me, were, next day, at my feet! The verdict of the playhouse had taught them that I had personal charms. Why, then, did I not straightway open a copy of Rochefoucault's "Maxims"? There I should have discovered that the woman who enjoys the highest reputation is she who has none whatever.

My parents, as well as my husband's family, contributed handsomely towards my expenses, and soon my elegance and good taste became a by-word. I was to be seen everywhere, in the Bois, at the ball, at the play.

While thus plunged in a whirl of gaiety and dissipation, I still made every effort to get my husband struck off the list of exiles, but all such efforts proved fruitless. I thought that my father's presence in Paris might possibly ensure success, and consequently I added my persuasions to those of General Milet-Mureau, the new Minister of War, inviting him to come to the capital. We had great difficulty in inducing him to consent. He prized his life of seclusion, and for him horticulture replaced



all dreams of ambition, yet he yielded to my entreaties, hoping that such complacency might have my husband's freedom as its reward. He came to live with me in the Rue du Bac, at the corner of the Rue de Varennes. Our house adjoined that of Madame de Staël. My father's friendship with Count Louis de Narbonne had brought him into touch with Madame de Staël, who was on terms of great intimacy with the Count. Living so close to her, such acquaintanceship was renewed, and we very often saw her. Just then there was a Jacobin reaction, which luckily did not last long, though long enough for the newspapers of that persuasion to heap daily insults upon Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant.

It is extraordinary that this famous woman, so far above petty revolutionary factions, should have been so sensitive to such wretched sarcasm. The fact remains, however, that every day when the papers came she almost had convulsions of fury. After some hours she grew calmer, yet next day her writhings recommenced.

I often used to go with my father to Madame de Staël's. In the course of my life I have met some very witty people, yet none were such brilliant talkers, nor endowed with such a wealth of ideas as she. Madame de Staël was never at a loss for a word; the simple one that best expressed her

thought was always at hand; she made no effort to find it. In this respect her conversation was more delightful than her books. When reading these, one occasionally thought of the axiom of her mother, Madame Necker: "When an author has a choice of expressions, he should always give the preference to that which offers more than one sense, and which leaves something to the reader's imagination." This principle, to my mind, is thoroughly false; and its falseness is best displayed by the pen of a second-rate author. The feebler his matter, the more careful should he be as to his choice of words. Though he show poverty of thought, a writer may yet please and attract regard by a style that is pure, clear-cut and precise; beauty of expression is often merely a mask for nonsense. Far from seeking to pick out fine words with double meanings, a writer ought ever to use that one which most clearly shows his thought.

## CHAPTER VII

*Visit to the directors—Embarrassment of Madame R.—The Gobelin sofas—The salon of Barras—Scandals about Madame Tallien and himself—Witty remark about Madame de Staël—A repartee of Talleyrand—Madame de Staël's indiscretion—Garat, the senator; Garat, the singer; and Garat, the tribune—My efforts prove unsuccessful—Death of my husband's parents—Their goodness to me—Bonaparte as First Consul—My father returns to Paris alone—He is unanimously proposed as senator—My husband struck off the emigrants' list—Death of my father—His funeral obsequies—His work, and the homage paid to his memory by the regiment.*

My father's position at the War Office obliged us occasionally to visit the Directory. One day we were at Madame R.'s, who had just taken up her residence at the Petit Luxembourg, and was still amazed at the splendour by which she was surrounded. Embarrassed somewhat at having to hold her Court, and being totally devoid of conversation, she was delighted to find a topic at last in the beauty of sundry Gobelin furniture, to wit, four sofas set against the four walls. After pausing for awhile upon one of these, and expatiating upon its

beauty, she moved on to another, as if they were four stations, we walking after. I had the utmost difficulty in maintaining my gravity while making this tour round her room.

In speaking of the Directory, one cannot omit mentioning the Rewbel family, notable by reason of the contrasts it presented. The father had all the bounce and swagger of some upstart lawyer from the provinces, the mother being like a rotund good-natured-looking tradeswoman. The eldest son was a perfect caricature of a fine gentleman of the old *régime*. He professed sovereign contempt for democracy and democrats. Being on intimate terms with Messieurs de Laigle, he was for ever talking about them, and he generally chose as his associates persons whose opinions were totally opposed to his father's. Apart, however, from such mannerisms, it is only just to him to say that he was of the greatest service to many of the emigrants. After this period he was intimate with Jerome Bonaparte, and they were at Baltimore together. Like Jerome, he got married there; only he kept his wife.

Upon leaving Madame R., we went on to Barras; here we found M. de Talleyrand, Madame de Staël, Bernadotte, and a crowd of generals. The Director, however, was not in the room; they said that he had just gone into his study with Madame Tallien. An hour afterwards we saw them come out. One

of the Director's arms was round Madame Tallien's waist; in this posture they returned to the drawing-room. My father was so indignant at such disregard of the proprieties that he got me to come away, and we determined that I should never visit such a Court as that again, which seemed more like a brothel than the residence of the chiefs of the government. I have stated my admiration for Madame de Staël's wit; I ought to add that the only defect which I thought I noticed in her, a set-off to her brilliant qualities, was her passion—her devouring passion for sensation, movement, occupation. They used to say of her that she would have liked to pitch all her friends into the water, for the pleasure of having to pull them out again; and I really think that there was some truth in this. Nothing could exceed her delight at being able to do them a service.

This need of taking possession of her friends was carried to excess; it amounted to positive indiscretion. She tired them out with her affection, her jealousy, and all the petty attentions which she liked to show them. Talleyrand's witticism is well known. An intimate friend once asked him how Madame G., with all her stupidity, had managed to conquer him. "Well, you see," he said, "Madame de Staël tired me out so with her cleverness that I thought a little of the other thing would not do

me any harm." Her indiscretion once provoked a delightful answer. I had been dining elsewhere with friends, and was leaning against the chimney-corner, taking some coffee. Close by sat Mesdames Grand, de Flahaut and de Staël. The latter, seeing Talleyrand pass, called to him; and, after pointing out the chance which had thus brought together three women with whom he had been in love, she asked him to tell them, frankly, which of the three, if they were drowning, he would save first.

With his wonted grace, and that fine mocking smile peculiar to him, he answered, "Ah, madam, you swim so well!"

A charming reply was this; it exactly described everything. On another occasion she gave me a further specimen of her want of tact. I was dining at the same minister's, and sat next to Garat, who afterwards became senator. Suddenly we were all much surprised when Madame de Staël, breaking off her conversation with her neighbour, called across the table in a loud voice, "By the way, Garat, talking of bad marriages, have you married that woman yet?" Nothing could exceed Garat's confusion, as he replied, "I do not know, madam, to what marriage you refer; I know that I am married, and am very happy." There were thirty guests at table. I cite this instance as it is characteristic of Madame de Staël; it displays that

want of tact in<sup>3</sup> her which served to exhaust the patience of her best friends, who could appreciate her kind heart and her inimitable wit. She certainly never dreamed that such a question could wound Garat, yet, all the same, she made him for a moment far from comfortable. Garat's name reminds me of his nephew, the singer, and of all his absurdities. It is incredible how spoilt this person was by society. He treated ministers and nobles just as if they were his equals. Madame de Talleyrand once invited him to dinner, and there was to be music afterwards. Charles de Flahaut, then quite a lad, played the piano with Jadin, his master, and Garat, who had come back from Spain, sang some *boleros*. Probably<sup>3</sup> as the dinner was served too late to please him before we sat down I heard him tell the minister, in most impertinent fashion, that it was the last time he would ever dine with him, and that he preferred dining at Beauvilliers', at whatever hour suited him. At this dinner his brother, the tribune, was present, whose flirtation with clever Madame de C. is well known. His success with other brilliantly-witted ladies, if surprising, is nevertheless indisputable.

As our efforts to secure the return of Monsieur de V. proved fruitless, my father, growing weary, was anxious to leave Paris, and go back to the peace of his country garden. I accompanied him

thither. I felt uneasy about the health of my husband's parents, a letter having informed me of their illness. Soon after my return to them my mother-in-law died, nor did her husband long survive her.

In dying, they gave me the same proofs of that affection which, during their lifetime, I had prized, leaving me all the fortune remaining to them after sharing this with the government, which took half. While I was nursing them, a great revolution occurred in Paris. The Directory no longer existed; Bonaparte had been appointed Consul. He only knew my father by repute, and desired to see him in Paris. As my father had left the service he could not be ordered, but only invited, to come. I was with him when the letter arrived, and strongly opposed his projected refusal. The great change in events made me hope that now the long-hoped-for cancelling of my husband's name might at last be effected. This motive made him decide. He set off for the capital, but I did not accompany him.

Hardly had he reached Paris, where his brilliant reputation had preceded him, than my father was proposed as a member of the newly-formed senate. His election was never for a moment doubtful; the three corps, who each could put forward a candidate if they liked, had one and all voted in his favour.



Such unanimity was in truth a fine tribute to my father's genius. Alas! honours such as these did but surround his tomb.

After my father-in-law's decease, I came back to my father in Paris, and we both rejoiced at the speedy return of my husband, having obtained his pardon. He arrived in time for the funeral!

To comprehend all that I lost by the death of my father, one would have to be cognisant of all that he was to me, my close, affectionate friend, the sharer of all my thoughts, my wise, enlightened guide. So dire a separation left me strengthless, and with scarcely the courage to bear it. All honours that were possible at his interment I caused to be paid. For some years burials were never sanctified by the rites of the Church, but I desired that this sad ceremony should be hallowed by all the pomp of the Catholic religion. This was not vain ostentation; it was a heartfelt need; and my example was generally followed by others.

Further honour was shown to the memory of my beloved parent by his old regiment, when, in 1816, General Marescot came to ask me for a portrait of my father to be placed in the residence of the Committee of Fortifications, beside that of Vauban. Such honour paid to his memory sixteen years after his death will always be for me a noble and beautiful remembrance.

## CHAPTER VIII

*Madame Récamier—A concert at her house—A day spent with her at Clichy—Fox, Lord and Lady Holland and her other guests—The writer's interview with M. Adair—Fox and Moreau—The latter's modesty—La Harpe, Lord Erskine and M. de Narbonne—Madame Récamier sings a romance—The Duchess of Gordon—Her lovely daughter—The pupils of Vestris—We drive in the Bois—M. Récamier—The savage from the Aveyron forest—Quarrel between La Harpe and Lalande—The latter's liking for spiders—Messieurs de Cobentzel, Berckheim and Dolgorouki—Wedding festivities at Clichy—We join these—Madame de Stael among the guests—She impersonates Hagar—Madame Viotte sings her romance—M. de Cobentzel as a low comedian—M. de Luchesi's opinion as to meals.*

IN publishing these recollections of an imprudent youth, and in showing the dangers of extreme independence, I am glad to cite the instance of a woman, beautiful, rich, and environed by every seduction, yet round whom the daggers of calumny fell in fragments, for these might never touch her.

Madame Récamier is, indeed, a rare instance to quote, albeit calumny did not spare her. Yet envy must perforce find food. Happy the woman at

whom this monster hurls but a few random, ineffectual darts!

Madame Récamier was introduced to me by M. de Narbonne. She came to some of my receptions, I being invited to hers in return. M. Récamier had just bought M. Necker's house, and that winter Madame Récamier began her receptions, the most brilliant ones in all the town. To such assemblies everyone, distinguished either by birth or talent, was eager to secure admission. Such eagerness, indeed, made society there somewhat overcrowded. But society at that time was all too heterogeneous; and such gatherings resembled a harlequin's dress, composed of patchwork.

Let me instance a concert to which I was invited. The day had been badly chosen, since the performers were artistes from the Opera, and one had to wait until their work at the theatre was over and they had changed their costume. Thus it happened that the concert did not begin until it was time for everybody to be going home. I will not speak of the music, for, tired of sitting in a circle from ten o'clock till half-past twelve, I gladly profited by the stir occasioned by the arrival of the singers and made my escape.

I know nothing more dreary than the time of waiting for a private concert to begin. On this particular evening Madame Récamier's large drawing-

room was filled with a huge circle of women, most of them strangers to each other, and consequently devoid of any materials for conversation. The men, more fortunate than we, were all in an adjoining room, and only a very few of them occasionally ventured to cross this vast female areopagus and speak to some of us. Placed between Madame Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angely and Madame Michel, just then a bride, as I knew neither of these ladies, being a third party, I was reduced to listening to their chit-chat. Such talk reminded me of an empty mill; I heard the noise of it, but where was the flour? Adrien de Montmorency came up and spoke to me for a moment, congratulating Madame Michel upon her marriage. The delicate irony and subtle wit which often makes his conversation remarkable, served to amuse me for a moment, at least, during that tedious evening.

I must now give details of a day spent at Madame Récamier's country seat at Clichy-la-Garenne, and here she was seen to the greatest advantage. Here, in the country, amid the poor, whom she clothed and cherished, one got to know all the beauty of her character, of her soul—a jewel rarer and more perfect than the lovely casket wherein this was enclosed. I knew that on that day many celebrated persons, both French and English, would be present, and I determined to go very early. I

got there at ten o'clock. This day, set apart for pleasure, had begun, in Madame Récamier's case, by the fulfilment of a duty. She had gone to hear mass in the village with Madame Bernard, her mother, and M. de la Harpe. She was returning thence when I arrived, and asked our permission to go and get dressed. Meanwhile I went to visit Clichy Church, which, like all others, had now been reopened to the faithful, and which still attested the fury and the vandalism of revolutionists. The club used to meet there, and it had afterwards served as an asylum for the poor; the Gothic windows alone proclaimed its original destination. Flowers were the only ornament of the altar. The priest himself narrowly escaped being massacred on the 3rd of September. The only decoration of a holy nature was a picture of the Benediction, given by Father l'Enfant to the Abbaye prisoners. Madame Récamier had this painted according to the venerable curé's description.

Returning to the *salon*, I found M. de Narbonne, Camille Jordan, General Junot, and General Bernadotte. Soon afterwards, Talma arrived, and M. de Longchamps, who was going to read *Le Séducteur Amoureux*, a piece about which he wished M. de La Harpe to give his opinion before submitting it to the committee of the Théâtre Français.

Soon afterwards came MM. de Lamoignon and

Adrien and Mathieu de Montmorency, whose illustrious names had ceased to be for them as a death-knell, and who, rising from the wreck of the Revolution, brought to the new order of things that French elegance of manner and distinction once the exclusive possession of their noble ancestors.

At last General Moreau arrived, followed shortly afterwards by Mr. Fox, Lord and Lady Holland, Mr. Erskine, and Mr. Adair. Thus, representatives of France, old and new, met together, besides foreigners, who merely knew each other by name. Before speaking, they surveyed one another, and, despite M. de Narbonne's talent for sustaining and enlivening the talk, everybody seemed ill at ease. Fortunately for them, Madame Récamier soon returned. With her own peculiar grace she approached Mr. Fox, and said to him, "I am very happy, sir, to receive a visit from a man who is no less esteemed in France than he is admired in England. Will you, as also Lord and Lady Holland, allow me to introduce my friends?" Then she mentioned all the persons present, cleverly alluding to the particular talent of each, and in this way conversation soon became general.

Luncheon was announced. Madame Bernard did the honours of her daughter's table. Madame Récamier sat between Fox and Moreau, who both looked thoroughly at their ease. By a lucky chance

I was placed next to Mr. Adair, who talked to me about England, of which he gave me such a vivid description that I felt keenly desirous of becoming acquainted with that country. It was, in fact, soon after this luncheon-party that I went to London. Mr. Adair spoke of his illustrious friend with an enthusiasm that evidently was sincere. His remarks about affairs in France were so judicious and profound that I could but feel intense admiration for a politician who had such a thorough knowledge of men and things.

It will not be expected that I can report, word for word, all the wise and witty things said during the two hours that lunch lasted. War and politics, literature and the fine arts, were in turn discussed. It was sought to compare England with France, and to define the merits of the two nations. Fox and Moreau principally attracted attention. One might have taken them for two friends who had met after long absence. To a pleasing intellect, the former added great vivacity in speaking and a merry, frank, engaging manner. The other, simple and modest, gave his opinion with such reserve, and listened with such complacent attention, that his brilliant reputation was not needed in order to make him beloved by all with whom he came in contact. He said, with charming simplicity, to Erskine, who had given us an eloquent summary of the trial of

Thomas Pain, "I ought to have been at the bar too; it was my family's wish. If I am a soldier, it is partly due to chance and partly to my own inclination, yet so little mastery have we of the part we play in the world that it is only at the close of our careers that we can actually regret our choice or congratulate ourselves upon it."

M. de la Harpe sat next to Erskine, and they both carried on a lively conversation, amusing us by their brilliant sallies. When M. de Narbonne tried to make the conversation general, each of the guests sought to let it turn upon some point in the life-story of his neighbour. Thus, successively, we discussed, analysed and applauded Moreau's famous retreat, Fox's appeal to the King to force Pitt to make peace, Erskine's speech to the jury, M. de Narbonne's administration, M. de la Harpe's course of lectures on literature, the public and private life of Montmorency, Junot's bravery, Dupaty's poems, &c., &c.

Coffee was just being served when we heard a noise of horses in the courtyard, and, a moment afterwards, Eugene Beauharnais and his friend, Philippe de Ségur, were announced. Young, full of spirit, and brilliant by his own glory as well as by the reflected splendour of his stepfather, Eugene was in no degree spoilt by the advantages of his actual position. Beneath the elegant uniform of



the guides one could easily recognise the same young man who, a few years before, had been apprenticed to a carpenter, so as to help his mother and sister, and who, transported from Italy to the Pyrenees, had in a brief space of time become the adopted son of the man who now attracted the attention of all Europe. Advancing towards Madame Récamier he apologised for his being so late, and, turning to Mr. Fox, he delivered his mother's message of invitation to La Malmaison. Soon afterwards we rose, when the guests dispersed, and took a short stroll in the grounds. Most of them clustered round Fox and Madame Récamier, until Moreau carried off the former, and walked arm-in-arm with him to the château.

Upon our return to the drawing-room, Madame Récamier desired to let the distinguished foreigners hear Talma recite, and, with her usual tact, suggested that some passage from Shakespere should be given. Accordingly, the famous actor chose a scene from *Othello*, and, as Madame de Staël aptly remarked, it was enough for him to pass his hand through his hair and knit his brow to be the Moor of Venice. He at once inspired terror, just as if all the illusions of the stage surrounded him. He afterwards, at Madame Récamier's request, recited a piece from *Macbeth*.

The actor's low, mysterious voice, as he uttered

these thrilling lines ; the way in which he placed his fingers at his lips, like the statue of Silence ; his expression, which suddenly changed at some horrible recollection ; all this produced a marvellous and hitherto unattained effect upon his audience, of which no description can ever give an adequate idea.

Having charmed all those present, Talma withdrew, being obliged to attend rehearsal. The English guests were loud in their praise of the art that could thus interpret their greatest tragic poet. After Talma had gone, there was some music. Nadermann and Frederick played a duet, and Madame Récamier was asked to sing. Accompanying herself on the harp, she sang a pretty romance by Plantade. Need I add that everyone was charmed with her voice ?

“In such pleasant company, time flies.” This was what M. de Ségur remarked, as he added that the First Consul’s carriages had been waiting for an hour in the avenue. Mr. Fox and his friends thereupon took their leave of the fair hostess, accompanied by Eugene de Beauharnais and Philippe de Ségur.

We were still talking of our English guests when others were announced—the Duchess of Gordon and her daughter, Lady Georgiana, now Duchess of Bedford. The Duchess of Gordon was a pleasant, affable person ; perhaps the few French words which she used to pronounce with her garbled English accent served to make her noteworthy as much as any-

thing else. Who has not heard the beauty of her daughter extolled? The virginal air of this lovely English girl, together with the sweet expression and charm of her eyes and features, provoked general homage.

These ladies came in just as M. de Longchamps was preparing to read his play to us, and, having asked permission to form part of the audience, they sat down and the author began. We found his comedy quite charming, and M. de la Harpe himself, severe critic as he is, complimented the author upon it. He was just commenting upon some of the scenes when the muse of poetry had to give way to one of her colleagues. The new-comer was no other than M. Vestris, son of the famous dancer. He had come to rehearse with Madame Récamier a gavotte composed by him last winter for herself and Mademoiselle de Coigny.<sup>1</sup> This gavotte was going to be danced the following evening by Madame Récamier and Lady Georgiana at a ball given by the Duchess of Gordon. There could be no question of sending away a master like Vestris. Accordingly the ladies consented to rehearse the gavotte before us. It was danced to a harp and horn accompaniment.

Never did nymphs more fairy-like bewitch mortal eyes. Madame Récamier, tambourine in hand, raised

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<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Madame Sebastiani, who died at Constantinople, at her husband's brilliant embassy.

this above her head at each step, yet each time with fresh grace; while Lady Georgiana, who, instead of a tambourine, had got a shawl, like some more bashful *bayadère*, sought to use this as a veil. In her gestures there was that mixture of modesty and *abandon* which served to enhance the loveliness of her outlines. Her charms, half-hidden or half-revealed by the undulating gauze; her eyes, anon cast down, and anon giving you a furtive glance—all this combined to prove deeply seductive. Yet Madame Récamier's poses were so graceful, so varied, that they tempted one to watch her rather than Lady Georgiana, and in her smile there was a charm which secured for her the greatest share of the on-lookers' admiration. Amid such general enthusiasm it was amusing to note the ecstatic delight of Vestris. The good man apparently thought that all this poetry of gesture and movement, expression and attitude, was inspired solely by *his genius*.

After this charming impromptu dance, the Duchess of Gordon, Madame Récamier and myself went for a drive in the Bois de Boulogne. Our excursion was a brief one, yet long enough to let us perceive that Lady Georgiana was of those who, in addition to beauty, had intellectual charm. The dinner-hour was so near that we begged the Duchess to drive us back to Clichy as soon as possible. On bidding us good-bye, she invited us to the ball which

she was going to give next night at the Hôtel de Richelieu, where she was staying.

Just as we got back to the château it struck five, the hour when dinner was always on the table, for M. Récamier liked punctuality for his own sake no less than for that of his guests. Besides others, we found him surrounded by M. de Lalande, the astronomer, MM. Degerando and Camille Jordan. M. Degerando is known by his philosophical works of a mildly optimistic character. Camille Jordan, who, as politician, possessed the rare quality of honesty, was in private life distinguished by his good temper and vivacity.

M. Récamier devoted all his time to important business, which daily served to augment his credit, and deputed his wife (who might have passed as his daughter) to receive all those persons who came with introductions to him from all parts of the world. He owed his fortune to his energy and thorough knowledge of banking affairs, and encouraged all his wife's countless generous and charitable acts. Charmed to see her shine in society, he was equally delighted to note her solicitude for some poor peasant woman, to whom as great attention was paid as if she were the representative of one of the most powerful monarchs in the world.

Another remarkable guest was expected that day, the famous Aveyron savage. At last he arrived, ac-

accompanied by M. Yzard, who was at once his tutor, physician and benefactor.

Of unknown origin, this savage was found in the forest of Aveyron, where doubtless for several years he had lived upon fruits, vegetables, and such animals as he had managed to catch. He himself had been trapped in a net laid for him by woodcutters, who brought him to Paris, where the government placed him in the care of Doctor Yzard. This physician was at the utmost pains to civilize him, and conceived for him an affection like that of a father for his son. Nevertheless, all efforts could not break him of his savage habits; and, either through inattention or because his vocal organs were imperfectly developed, he never managed to do more than make sundry guttural sounds, apparently in imitation of the cries of different animals. Madame Récamier made him sit beside her, perhaps supposing that the same beauty which captivated civilized beings might receive a like homage from this child of Nature, who, seemingly, was not more than fifteen years old.

It was a scene that momentarily recalled Voltaire's *Ingénue* sitting next to pretty Madame de Saint-Yves, though our hero was less gallant than Voltaire's and more concerned about the abundant food, which he devoured with startling greediness as soon as his plate was filled. Indeed, the young

savage cared but little for the lovely eyes whose attention he drew upon himself. When dessert was served, and he had adroitly pocketed all the sweetmeats on which he could lay his hands, he quietly slipped away from table. No one noticed that the young savage had left the room, as all were listening to an animated discussion between La Harpe and Lalande with reference to the latter's atheism and his strange taste for eating spiders. A sudden noise in the garden made M. Yzard suspect that for this his pupil was alone responsible. He rose to verify such suspicions, and curiosity led us all to search for the fugitive, whom we soon spied running across the lawn as swiftly as a hare. That his movements might be freer he had stripped off all clothing, except his shirt. This latter, on reaching the large chestnut trees in the main alley of the park, he also tore up into pieces as if it had been a strip of gauze, and then climbed up the trees like a squirrel and set amid the branches.

As much through disgust as through a sense of decency, the ladies kept in the background, while the gentlemen set to work to capture this child of the woods. M. Yzard tried all his usual methods to recall the boy, but without success. Heedless of his tutor's entreaties, or fearful perhaps that punishment would follow such an escapade, the young savage leapt from bough to bough, and from

tree to tree, until he got to the extreme end of the avenue. The gardener then held out a basket of peaches to the truant, who, yielding to this argument, came down from the tree and let himself be caught. A garment was hastily improvised for him out of an old petticoat belonging to the gardener's niece; thus wrapped up he was deposited in the carriage and driven off, leaving the guests at Clichy-la-Garenne to draw a useful comparison between the savage and the civilized state. La Harpe, in particular, grew greatly excited. "Ah!" cried he, "I only wish that Jean-Jacques Rousseau were here, with his diatribes against the social state!" In default of Rousseau, however, the rhetorician resumed his discussion with Lalande. This astronomer was also not without his fads and eccentricities. I spoke but now of his liking for spiders, being as proud of this as if it were a philosophic virtue. The origin of this taste was his affection for Madame Lepante, whom, in lines worthy of a mathematician, he once apostrophised as "The *tangent* of hearts and the *sinus* of souls!" Anxious to place this lady above the level of prejudice and to cure her of her dread of spiders, caterpillars, &c., he at last accustomed her to look at, touch, and finally to swallow these insects, he setting her the example.

Meanwhile, about seven o'clock, a line of carriages drove along the avenue, bringing guests to



the château. Among these were: the Russian Ambassador and his secretaries; the Counts de Cobentzel, one of whom was Austrian Ambassador; Sigismund de Berckheim,<sup>1</sup> and young Prince Dolgorouky, who had come with him from St. Petersburg. Fruit and ices were served to the newcomers, who were likewise regaled with an account of the chase of the young savage. This greatly amused the diplomats. Soon, however, the talk took a more serious turn, half political, half scientific, until Madame Récamier proposed taking a walk through the village, and we were all eager to accompany her. After walking for a while, the sounds of a fife, violin and tambourine led us to move in the direction of the river. There had been a rustic wedding at Clichy, and the newly-married couple, with their friends, were dancing in a little tent. Madame Récamier persuaded us to join the festivities. The bride and bridegroom, flattered and honoured at our visit, received us with every mark of regard, and that our arrival on the scene produced a piquant contrast may well be imagined. Such is the omni-

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<sup>1</sup> Sigismund de Berckheim was afterwards aide-de-camp to General Caulaincourt. It was he who brought the Elector of Baden the First Consul's letter relative to the arrest of the Duke d'Enghien. He only learned the result of this deplorable mission upon his return to Paris, where he arrived the same day as the unfortunate nobleman. On hearing next day of the execution at Vincennes, this brave young officer entirely lost his reason, remaining for a long while in this sad state.

potence of beauty that grave diplomats and portly financiers sought to rival the merry peasants in agility, while the noble denizens of the North ventured for the first time to stray in the winding measures of a French country-dance, presided over by the most charming, most accomplished woman in the world. A general tone of merriment gave additional interest to a scene worthy of the brush of an Albano or a Teniers.

Night was approaching, and the rustic ball came to a close. Madame Récamier took Count de Markoff's arm, and we returned to the château. Here we found a large party, including Madame de Staël, Madame Viotte, General Marmont and his wife, and the Marquis and Marchioness Luchesini. The Marquis was a man of talent and a diplomatist, who enjoyed the entire confidence of his Sovereign, the King of Prussia. Before he came to Paris a great reputation had preceded him. We finished the evening by playing at proverbs, which served to exhibit the talent of certain of the guests in its most advantageous light. Madame de Staël had thus an opportunity of showing her marvellous gift of improvisation; Madame Viotte could prove her right to the title of the tenth muse, bestowed upon her by La Harpe; and Count de Cobentzel, considered one of the best actors at the Hermitage, the theatre attached to the Court of the Empress Cathe-

rine, would now let us judge for ourselves of his<sup>1</sup> talent, which Ségur and all our Russian friends declared to be inimitable.

We began by several dramatic scenes. The first was "Hagar in the Desert." Madame de Staël played the part of Hagar, her son<sup>1</sup> that of Ishmael, and Madame Récamier was the angel.

It is difficult to describe the effect produced by Madame de Staël in this extremely dramatic part, and yet I should like to mention the pathetic manner in which she depicted Hagar's anguish and despair. Though acted in a drawing-room, the dramatic illusion of this scene was perfect. With her long sparse hair, Madame de Staël looked the character to the life, just as Madame Récamier, with her pure, celestial beauty, was the very personification of the heavenly messenger. For her those lines of an English poet would seem to have been written :

"Oh ! woman, lovely woman !

Angels are painted fair to look like you."

In her expression of Hagar's maternal love, Madame de Staël displayed all that lofty enthusiasm and energy which are noticeable in her writings. Inspired by the admiration of her hearers, perhaps she never was more completely herself than now ; every look, every gesture bore the stamp of genius.

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<sup>1</sup> This young man, when only twenty, was killed at Stockholm, in a duel.

It required to be seen in order to conceive how such talent as Madame de Staël's, unaided by beauty, could portray the most powerful of all feminine passions.<sup>1</sup>

When this scene ended, we began to play proverbs, but, in the interval, Madame Viotte sang us her latest romance, then in vogue in Paris. In the proverbs, the different authors who were present ran each other very close in wit and skill. M. de Cobentzel amply justified the fame that had preceded him. But it was noticed that he excelled chiefly in low comedy, much to the horror of his diplomatic colleagues, who could not readily forgive him for changing his embroidered uniform for the doublet of a mountebank. After the proverbs we acted charades, in which everyone present took part. We dressed ourselves up as well as we could, and played our parts, some well and others badly. The most awkward actors proved the most amusing.

At last it struck eleven, when supper was announced. Supper is certainly the pleasantest act in the day's comedy. As the Marquis de Luchesini told us, breakfast is for friendship, dinner for etiquette, and supper for love and the exchange of confidences.

1 Among Madame de Staël's complete works there is a piece entitled *Hagar*, which may be the one performed at Clichy-la-Garenne.

So quickly had time passed that we could hardly believe that it was midnight. It is with life as with wealth; we are lavish of it when we possess it in abundance; and we only cling fondly to it when it comes to an end.

## CHAPTER IX

*Fête at Raincy—M. Ouvrard's splendid hospitality—Madame Tallien—Fox and his friends—Fox's visit to La Malmaison—Bonaparte's reception of him—Generals Lafayette and Kosciuszko—Accident to Madame Visconti—General Lannes—His opinions—Mr. Erskine's distaste for sport—Music during dinner—A toast to Lady Holland—We dance on the lawn—Bonaparte's dislike of M. Ouvrard—The reason for this—The Salon des Etrangers—High play and exquisite dancing—Bigotini and Miller—A generous Englishman—I overhear a strange conversation—Josephine and Madame Tallien.*

ABOUT the same time M. Ouvrard gave a charming *fête* at Le Raincy. To this I was very anxious to go, although I did not know him, nor Madame Tallien, who was to do the honours; but as I was intimate with the Princess Dolgorouky, we went together.

M. Ouvrard was going to give a lunch-party in his orangery, to which he invited Madame Tallien and her friends. The preparations for this *fête* were all superintended by M. Bertheaux, one of the leading Paris architects. A hunting-party was to succeed the lunch. Situated about four leagues from Paris,

before it belonged to M. Ouvrard, Le Raincy was the property of the Duke d'Orleans. Its grounds were on the border of the forest of Bondy. This wealthy merchant, however, did not consider the residence of a prince of the blood commensurate for him; and he consequently enlarged and embellished it, until it became as a veritable fairy palace. Such was the magnificent hospitality of its owner that all the buildings in the grounds, the lodges, pavilions, and the château itself, besides a house in the village, were all occupied in summer-time by M. Ouvrard's guests. He himself lived in a little house on the heights of Le Raincy, near the waterworks which supplied the lakes and fountains in the park. M. Ouvrard was rather vain of such hospitality; and he once jokingly observed, that as lodge-keepers he had got three Ministers of State. This was actually the fact. M. de Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Berthier, Minister of War, and M. Decrès, Minister of Marine, had each chosen, as their summer residence, one of the charming cottages which served as lodges of the Le Raincy park.

As a rule there is a sameness about the description of most *fêtes*. This, however, was of a special character, owing to the exquisite taste shown in all the arrangements, and also to the presence of so many distinguished personages.

By inviting Madame Tallien, M. Ouvrard desired

her to do the honours of his establishment, and the *fête* was certainly worthy, in every respect, of its charming president.

In an orangery, paved with marble, a table had been set on a platform running parallel to several beautiful orange trees, which, laden with fruit and blossom, formed a verdurous canopy, exhaling delicious perfume. In the centre of this table was a marble basin, full of clear sparkling water, with golden sand at its bottom, in which fish of all hues disported themselves. The luncheon was of the most sumptuous kind, the fare being profuse and choice. In the adjoining room, where coffee and ices were served, the walls were covered with foliage, and from trellised vines hung huge clusters of luscious grapes. In each corner of this room were four marble basins, in the form of cockle-shells, with fountains of punch, orgeat and orange-flower water. Fruits from both hemispheres, some in their natural state and some preserved, filled the choice porcelain dishes; exquisite wines and choice liqueurs sparkled in the crystal glasses; while the profusion of gold and silver plate vied with the luxury of Oriental romance. Indeed, one was tempted to believe that the exhibitor of such magnificence must have found Aladdin's magic lamp.

As luncheon was to precede the hunting-party, guests were invited for mid-day, and everybody was



punctual—an unusual thing when the party is such a large one. Madame Tallien was the first to arrive, followed soon afterwards by Lord and Lady Holland, the Marchioness de Luchesini, Madame Marmont, Madame Diwoff, Madame Visconti, the Princess Dolgorouky and Madame Roger.<sup>1</sup>

Madame Tallien, whose rare beauty fully sustained its reputation, well deserved to be the goddess of such a shrine. Madame Marmont's dainty figure looked twice as pretty in her riding-habit; handsome Madame Visconti and Madame de Luchesini wore a similar costume, as they intended to join the meet. The Princess Dolgorouky formerly passed for one of the handsomest women of her time, and who has not heard of the burning passion with which she inspired the notorious Prince Potemkin?<sup>2</sup> It was to satisfy this lady's caprice, so they say, that Ocksakow was besieged, she never having seen a place taken by storm before.

Bright, intelligent little Madame Roger, with her childish figure and unstudied grace, well deserved to rank among Madame Tallien's younger friends, whose names I forbear to give, yet who were all distinguished by their youthful freshness and charm.

Special honours were shown at this *fête* to Lady Holland, the niece of Mr. Fox. This handsome

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1 Now Comtesse de Montholon.

2 For a long while the favourite of Catherine II.

Englishwoman was distinguished by her dignity of manner. Indeed, she might almost be accused of excessive reserve; and she formed a sharp contrast to the gay, vivacious young Frenchwomen who surrounded her. Everyone crowded round Madame Tallien, and sought to pay her all possible attention, endeavouring to amuse her to the best of their power.

Carriages soon began to drive up. In the first were Mr. Fox, Mr. Erskine, Mr. Adair and General Fitzpatrick. The second contained Count Markoff and the Marquis de Luchesini,<sup>1</sup> the Russian and Prussian Ambassadors. Then came Generals Junot, Berthier, Lannes and Marmont; M. de la Harpe; M. de Narbonne; Prince Dolgorouky; the Chevalier d'Azara, the Spanish Ambassador; and Adrien de Montmorency.

A fanfare of hunting-horns replaced the usual bell to announce luncheon, and we sat down to table. Madame Tallien gave Lady Holland the place of honour, between Prince Markoff and the Minister of War. She herself sat between Fox and Erskine; while the other guests took such places as they pleased.

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<sup>1</sup> The Marquis de Luchesini had been promoted from an obscure post in the ministry to that of ambassador. His talent had been highly praised before his arrival in France; indeed, some persons pretend that this has been somewhat overrated.

I again sat next to Mr. Adair, whom I had previously met at Madame Récamier's, and I forthwith proceeded to question him about his illustrious friend, Mr. Fox. He answered me with extreme courtesy.

"How did Mr. Fox like La Malmaison?" I asked.

"Oh, he was charmed with it," replied Mr. Adair; "it is a most beautiful place. Madame Bonaparte welcomed us with such fascinating grace that this explains the First Consul's affection for her, despite the difference in their ages. Knowing that Mr. Fox liked agriculture and botany," he continued, "Madame Bonaparte took us into her greenhouse and showed us her fine collection of exotics. After dinner, we left La Malmaison for the Théâtre Français. On entering the playhouse Mr. Fox was recognised, and greeted with a burst of applause."

"What did Mr. Fox think of the First Consul?"

"He liked him, personally, very much indeed."

"And our hastily-improvised Court at the Tuileries. What did he think of that?"

"Oh! he found it charming, like everything else. The first thing that he noticed in one of the rooms was a marble bust of himself. I don't think Peter the Great felt more honoured when, on visiting the Mint, they struck a medal in his honour. When

we entered the audience-chamber, the First Consul, approaching Mr. Fox, said to him, 'I am delighted to see you in Paris, sir. I have long admired you as an orator, and as the true friend of your country, to whom you are so anxious to give peace. I am very happy to make your acquaintance.' He added much more that was complimentary, and, coming from a man so extraordinary as he, Fox could not but prize such agreeable speeches. Then, turning to Mr. Erskine, of whose talents and brilliant reputation in England he evidently knew nothing, he said, 'You are a lawyer, sir, I believe. That's not much for a name like that.' Apart from this trifling blunder, Bonaparte spoke most charmingly to all of us. A few days afterwards," added Adair, "we went to Versailles, and dined at the Petit-Trianon. We also paid another visit to Saint-Cloud, Bellevue, and to M. de Talleyrand at Neuilly. Mr. Fox would need to have the gift of ubiquity in order to see everything before leaving Paris—the factories, museums, libraries, &c."

"Is the Hôtel de Richelieu very full?"

"Yes, it is crowded. Yesterday, as we were lunching with Lord and Lady Holland, two persons arrived who formed a curious contrast, physically. The one was tall and of easy, pleasant bearing, and though near middle-age, still kept the grace and vivacity of youth; the other was short, insignificant

in face and figure, with nothing about him that denoted the hero. The former was Lafayette, the valiant champion of American independence, the aristocratic revolutionist; the other was the Polish general, Kosciusko, of glorious renown, who, by reason of his valour and his noble conduct, deserves to be styled the Washington of his country. Lafayette has invited Mr. Fox, General Fitzpatrick, and myself to his home at La Grange. Kosciusko, Lafayette's old companion in arms, will join the party, which is fixed for the day after to-morrow."

"You just mentioned General Fitzpatrick," said I to Mr. Adair. "May I ask you where he is?"

"There, sitting between Madame Marmont and the Prussian Ambassador. He is a particular friend of Mr. Fox; and, having known General Lafayette in America, he spoke in his favour in the House of Commons during the latter's detention at Olmütz."

Where so many men of talent and intellect were assembled, it is needless to say that the lunch-party was both interesting and brilliant. Lord Holland has many of his uncle's qualities; like him, he combines the man of learning with the man of the world. A perpetual fire of witty speeches was carried on between the Englishmen and the Frenchmen; and the two nations would have been fortunate if a more serious rivalry had not provoked them to longer and more dreadful strife!

Horns now gave the signal for the commencement of the chase; the barking of dogs and the keepers' cries resounded in the distance; while carriages of all kinds drew up at the entrance to the orangery. Madame Tallien, Lady Holland, Mr. Fox, and Count Markoff seated themselves in one of these. Mesdames Marmont, Visconti and Luchesini rode away, accompanied by a brilliant escort; in short, each one consulted his own taste and did as he liked. Those who did not wish to follow the hounds were taken to the park, which furnished excellent sport in the shape of hares and pheasants. The meet was at one end of the forest, where we found a company of huntsmen waiting for us. All these gentlemen were in full hunting costume, and soon started off in pursuit of the stag. If the sumptuous luncheon had excited general admiration, the preparations for the hunt impressed us equally. Tents had been set up in the forest glades, with tables loaded with refreshments of all kinds, not only for the sportsmen, but also for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who had been attracted to the spot in crowds. The natural gaiety of the throng was heightened by the suave influence of wine, libations of which were generously poured forth, and the beautiful forest of Bondy presented a vast picture, composed of countless different groups.

An accident—fortunately without serious conse-

quences—clouded for awhile the *fête's* brightness. Madame Visconti's horse, becoming restive, suddenly bolted at full gallop. General Berthier, General Lannes, and a third cavalier rode off in hot haste to the lady's rescue, but they did not catch up with her until she had reached Villemomble, a village about a league distant.

On the way thither General Berthier fell from his horse, so that Lannes and his companion were left to give Madame Visconti assistance, who was greatly alarmed, albeit she escaped with the loss of her handsome riding-habit, which was torn to tatters. She had to be carried to the château, being too exhausted to ride thither. As chance willed it, certain huntsmen heard Berthier's cries as he floundered about in a pond, where his horse had thrown him. He was promptly fished out, and, as the carriage conveying Madame Visconti was just passing, they placed the mud-bespattered General beside her, and ~~drove~~ them both back to Raincy. Neither put in an appearance again that day, however, for they went back to Paris, having no further interest in the pleasures of the chase.

That day I had a long talk with General Lannes. He told me incidents in his military career which, like many another warrior's life at that time, were as exciting as those of a novel. Such men as these plumed themselves upon their obscure origin.

Lannes himself told me that he had left a dyer's shop to follow the republican flag. He owed his general's rank to his brave conduct at Lodi, Arcola and Aboukir, as well as to the friendship shown towards him by Napoleon. "Don't suppose," said the General to me, "don't suppose that one has only got to fight well in order to get on! There are so many obstacles in the way and luck\* counts for so much! After all, a soldier's career is an alternate succession of good and bad fortune. Yet love of glory alone makes him accept such a life of privations, albeit his name, if glory proclaim it, is heard but faintly in the smoke of the last cannon-shot that slays him." I recollected this philosophic speech five years afterwards, when reading the bulletins of the battle of Esling.<sup>1</sup>

At length the stag was run to earth near Bondy lake, and on our return to the castle we found that the shooting-party had also had a splendid day's sport, to judge by the quantities of game piled up outside the door of the orangery. The sight of this, as I imagine, was not wholly to Mr. Erskine's taste, for I noticed that he left the château without waiting for his friends, whom he declined to accompany on their hunting expedition.

M. de Saint-Farre and M. Saint-Albin, two

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<sup>1</sup> It was in this battle, fought on the 22nd of May, 1809, that Lannes got his death-wound.



natural sons of the Duke d'Orleans, joined the shooting-party, and M. Ouvrard, by his cordial welcome, strove to make them forget that Le Raincy had belonged to their father. Perhaps, though, this way of making them feel thoroughly at home was only calculated to let them remember the fact.

Dinner was now served upon a magnificent scale, and M. Ouvrard took his place at it as a mere guest, letting Madame Tallien do the honours, as before.

Fox and Moreau were charmed to meet each other again. The General was flattered at the attention paid to him by the Englishmen. He let them draw him out, and, laying aside his habitual shyness and reserve, he began to tell stories of his campaigns, doing this with such eloquence that he provoked a compliment to the effect that he was as great an orator as a strategist.

An orchestra of wind instruments played at intervals in the orangery, the sound of such music finding its echo in the distant trumpet-calls of the hunters of Grobois and Le Raincy, as they went to their homes.

After dinner, several hunting-songs were sung to the merry clink of glasses, and one of the guests proposed Lady Holland's health in couplets, which everyone thought charming, and which were repeated in chorus.

So gay a party as this could not end but with

a dance. The ball began upon the lawn, and everyone took part in it. Generals who had reached the pinnacle of their fame, statesmen rich in honours and in renown, ambitious youths for whom Fortune had so much enjoyment or distress in store, exiles who, on their native soil, soon forgot all the rigours of the revolutions, Englishmen, Russians, French and Prussians, all paid alike their tribute to Terpsichore. Midnight struck before any of the guests remembered that they had four good leagues to travel before they got to their beds in Paris.

Soon after this enchanting *fête* the giver of it was subjected to a long course of cruel persecutions.

Bonaparte did not like M. Ouvrard, and such hostility increased when the latter refused to lend the State twelve millions, of which it was in urgent need. Before incurring a further liability, the rich contractor claimed payment of an old debt of ten millions, dating from the time of the Directory.

Instead of examining his claim, they placed M. Ouvrard under police supervision, and seals were placed on all his papers.

Madame Visconti desired to intercede with Bonaparte on behalf of her friend, but General Berthier prevented her from doing so, saying that the First Consul would certainly accuse her, as well as himself, of being in collusion with M. Ouvrard. It was M. Collot, afterwards Director of the Mint,

who, though he did not know M. Ouvrard, alone had the courage to say to Bonaparte, "It's a bad beginning, General, to disturb everybody in this way." The First Consul replied, "A man who has thirty millions, and doesn't care if he loses them or not is too dangerous a man for my government."

After having been loaded with adulation because of his wealth, M. Ouvrard was obliged, under two hostile governments, and on two different occasions, to beg to be allowed, as a favour, to leave prison, accompanied by a keeper. The first time this was to receive his mother's dying blessing, and the second, to visit his beloved daughter, the Countess de Rochechouart, who was dangerously ill.

Of all fashionable amusements just then, the one most in vogue was the masked ball at the Salon des Etrangers. The honours of this select entertainment were done by the Marquis de Livry.

The best of European society was then in Paris, and France, scarcely freed from the tempests of the Revolution, seemed eager to seize hold of all such pleasures as might banish from her memory political woes. The Salon des Etrangers was filled nightly with a huge crowd.

What appallingly high play have I not seen here! Three hundred thousand francs lost at one stroke! Then, the quadrilles, how charming these were! And what dancers! Duport, Bigotini, and

Miller, all vied with each other in lightness, dexterity and grace. The suppers were served by Robert, that prince of epicures, not at one board, but at various little tables, where each could choose his company as well as his dishes.

There was an Englishman there, who, whenever he asked the waiter for anything, always gave him a louis. One night the fellow got as much as ten louis in this way, when he said, "My lord, perhaps you don't know that one does not pay here?"

"Oh, never mind, waiter, that is all right," coolly replied the Englishman; "When a man can risk a hundred thousand francs on a card, he can surely afford to give a louis or two to the servant that gets him some supper. Here are another ten louis for you, to prove that I am right."

How many people, of all classes and ages, used to come to the Marquis de Livry's, and risk the fruit of twenty years' labour and economy upon a single card! Beneath domino and mask what intrigues, political and amorous, lurked! How many persons came thither in search of each other, yet who were not fortunate enough to meet. How many enemies, too, who in the world avoided each other, here sat side by side.

Chance caused me once to witness a strange scene at one of these balls. It was nearly two

o'clock in the morning; the crowd was immense, and the heat excessive. Feeling oppressed, I went upstairs, where I could get more air, and having stayed here for awhile, I was about to return to the ball-room, refreshed, when my curiosity was roused by a most animated discussion which was going on in an adjoining room. Beaumarchais has said that in order to hear one must listen. Suspecting that it was an intrigue of some sort, I came closer, and recognised the voices as those of women, but their talk seemed so uninteresting that I was about to move on, when one of them mentioned Bonaparte's name. This name excited my interest anew, and I heard the lady say, "I assure you, my dear Theresina, that I have done everything that a friend could possibly do, but in vain. Only this morning I made another attempt, but he would not listen to anything that I said. I cannot think who has prejudiced him so violently against you. You are the only woman whose name he has struck off the list of my intimate friends, and it is because I dread his showing his displeasure openly (which would greatly grieve me), that I came on here to-night with my son. At this moment they imagine that I am fast asleep at the château, but I determined to come and see you and tell you how matters stand, comforting you, while endeavouring to justify myself."

"Josephine," replied the other lady, "I never for a moment doubted your kind-heartedness, nor the sincerity of your affection. Heaven knows that the loss of your friendship would be far more painful to me than the fear of Bonaparte. My conduct in these difficult times has been such as perhaps warranted my having the honour of visiting you; yet I will not importune you if he withholds his consent. He was not Consul when Tallien accompanied him to Egypt, when you both used to come to me, when I shared with you . . . ." Here sobs choked the speaker's utterance.

"Be calm, dearest, be calm," said her companion; "Let the storm pass over. I will manage to effect a reconciliation, but we must not irritate him further. You know that he does not like Ouvrard, with whom they say you are very intimate."

"Why, because he governs France, does he expect he can tyrannise over our hearths and homes? Are our private friendships to be sacrificed to him?"

As she said this there came a knocking at the door. It was Eugene de Beauharnais, who was looking everywhere for his mother.

"Madam," said he, "you have been here for more than an hour, and the council of ministers must be over by this time. What will the First Consul say if he does not find you at home when he returns?"

Eugene and the two ladies went slowly downstairs, and I myself left the ball soon afterwards.

I had been present at a most interesting scene, for one of the ladies subsequently became Empress of the French; the other was Madame Tallien, to whom France was indebted for Robespierre's fall.

## CHAPTER X

*Burial of my father—My reverses—My husband's confidence in me—His carelessness—I fall ill—My country-house undergoes restoration—We go to England—Ranelagh—Mrs. Fitzherbert and the Prince of Wales—Lady Jersey—The Prince of Wales's wedding-night—His coldness towards his wife—The Princess's strange behaviour—The Prince goes back to Mrs. Fitzherbert—His passion for this lady—His friendly treatment of myself—He presents me to the Duchess of Devonshire—He speaks perfect French—The Duchess's lunch-party—Routs and tea-parties—Beautiful potatoes and capital beefsteaks—They produce stomachache—The shy English ladies—Difference between married women in France and in England.*

SHORTLY before his death, my father purchased a charming country-house near Paris; the grounds attached to this were sufficiently extensive for me to let part of them serve as a burying-place for my beloved parent. Distracted by grief at his loss, I did but look forward to paying a daily visit to his tomb.

I never calculated that future events might oblige me to give up this house. I never calculated that half the fortune of my husband had been swallowed up by the government at the time he emigrated, and



that, upon the other half, bill-holders had claims. Thus what income still remained to me was insufficient to keep up a house which, with its large grounds and advantageous position between Paris and Versailles, had proved of vast expense to its former owner. Indeed, Monsieur de L.'s ruin is mainly attributed to his residence at this house, where he entertained the Court and half the town. I foresaw none of these dangers; no friendly voice warned me of their existence. My good, kind, easy-going husband considered that I had been very skilful in saving a part of his fortune, and thought that there was no danger in letting me manage everything. He had no business aptitude, and if he saw a farmer or tenant come in he took up his hat and went out. His confidence in me, and his thorough kindness of heart, which prevented him from thwarting me in the least thing, really had a fatal influence upon my after-life—and also upon his. As soon as I felt strong enough, I left Paris to visit my mother, and comfort her in her terrible bereavement. Here I broke down again, and was hindered by ill-health from returning to the capital. At length, Time, the great healer, served to calm my grief and make this bearable. Though I could never forget my excellent father, I managed to think of him without the poignant anguish that his loss at first provoked.

Upon my return to Paris, I was careful to pro-

vide for the embellishment of a house which now had become precious to me as the resting-place of my beloved parent. The superintendence of all projected restorations I left in the hands of an architect, and, profiting by the license accorded by the Treaty of Amiens to travel in England, my husband and I set out for London. The main object of our journey was to visit an aunt of Monsieur de V.'s, to whom he was much attached, and who, since the date of his emigration, had lived in England. Her rank and personal qualities had secured for her many friends, who cordially welcomed my husband and myself, and endeavoured to make our stay in London as agreeable as possible.

The day after my arrival, I was taken to Ranelagh. This establishment, now no longer in existence, was then deemed extremely fashionable. Mr. Smith, brother to Mrs. Fitzherbert, took us. They say that this lady had contracted a marriage with the Prince of Wales, which the law did not recognise, as Mrs. Fitzherbert was a Catholic. When, in compliance with the wishes of his family and Parliament, His Royal Highness consented to marry the Princess of Brunswick, Mrs. Fitzherbert quarrelled with him.

They say, too, that it was the intention of Lady Jersey, lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Wales, to effect the Prince's conquest, and take Mrs. Fitzherbert's place in his affections. Rumour also has

it that on his wedding-day, wishing to keep him away from his young bride, she mixed some brandy with the Princess's wine, so that the result might be to inspire the Prince with loathing for the lady.

I cannot say how far such odious details may be believed, but the following story is authentic, and I have it from an eye-witness.

The day after his wedding, the Princess, passing through a room in which her august spouse was sitting, approached him and took his hand in a caressing way, when the Prince withdrew it hastily and said to the friend next to him, "Feel my hand, how cold it is! That woman, when she touches me, makes me like ice."

Without positively attributing so revolting an act to Lady Jersey, it is not inconceivable that the manners of this Princess were in themselves sufficient to inspire an aversion which dates, indeed, from the wedding-night. I am the more inclined to believe this, as Mrs. Egerton (lady-in-waiting to the late Queen Charlotte) told me that, on the eve of the marriage, the Princess of Wales shocked all her ladies in attendance by her unseemly mirth and disgusting jokes. These last were repeated to me, but I dare not transcribe them here. Be that as it may, Lady Jersey, if she succeeded in pleasing the Prince for a moment, was very soon discarded. He went

back with redoubled passion to Mrs. Fitzherbert, his old flame, following her about everywhere and riding beside her carriage. She vainly strove to escape from his attentions and place the sea between them by flight to France; but soon she learned that chagrin had caused the Prince to fall ill. Yielding to his entreaties, she consented to return to England.

This passion still lasted while I was staying in London, though Mrs. Fitzherbert must have been over forty. The story goes that, dining once with friends when the talk turned upon a woman's age and the time when her charms were ripest, the Prince answered this question by proposing the health of a lady who was fair, fat and forty. The three ladies, indeed, who successively had a place in his affections were all over forty years old.

By inviting Mrs. Fitzherbert to an evening party one might be sure that the Prince would honour it with his presence. So it came about that I often met him at Lady Warren's charming house at Kensington, at Mrs. Duff's, and at the Duchess of St. Albans, her sister. The day after my arrival he was at Ranelagh, when I was escorted thither by Mrs. Fitzherbert's brother. The latter, approaching the Prince, expressed his regret that the Duchess of Devonshire should have already left Ranelagh, as he meant to have asked her for a card of invitation for a French lady who had just come to London, and

who would have liked to see the *fête* that the Duchess was giving the next day at Chiswick. The Prince most graciously observed that there was no necessity for me to have a card. He was going, and, if I apprised him of my arrival, he would be happy to present me to the Duchess himself. Next day, Mr. Smith, who escorted us, went to inform the Prince, who not only presented me, but walked up and down the lawn with me for some time. In due course the London papers which fill their spacious columns with society gossip and with minute details of ladies' dresses published a long account of my being presented by the Prince, and of my walking about with him. As I enjoyed his company and conversation for some time, I was able to appreciate the charm of his delicate raillery and somewhat caustic wit. He seemed highly amused at a certain M. Michel, who had recently visited England at the same time as Madame Récamier, and who had offered his best services to the Prince if he came to Paris, as if everyone ought to know that the heir to the British throne never left the kingdom nor ever needed the good offices of a M. Michel. I was surprised at the perfect way in which the Prince spoke French without the slightest foreign accent.

His conduct, on becoming Regent, provoked close comparison between himself and Henri V. Both had a tempestuous youth, and both, on their accession to

the throne, contrived to keep the quondam associates of their salad days at a distance.

Yet, when still the Prince of Wales, he knew how to check too great a familiarity on the part of some of his friends. The example may be cited of Beau Brummel, who one day asked the Prince to ring the bell for a glass of water. The Prince rang the bell, but drily said to the footman, "Call Mr. Brummel's carriage." This timely reproof made his friends understand that when a Sovereign is willing to forget the distance which separates him from his subjects, there is all the more reason that they should remember this. Beau Brummel has never appeared again before the Prince. Greatly mortified by such disgrace, he left England, and at present is living at Calais.

The *fête* given by the Duchess of Devonshire was a lunch to five hundred persons. Tables were spread in all the rooms and in some of the adjoining summer-houses. Lovely weather contributed greatly to the success of the entertainment. After luncheon there was dancing on the lawn. I had the honour of being in the same set as the Duke of Orleans and his brother, then still alive, the Duke de Beaujolais. The party was one of the pleasantest which I attended when in England.

As a rule, the great crushes so fashionable in London seemed to me hardly agreeable. When, after much difficulty, one has made the tour of the rooms,

often losing part of one's dress by the way, one goes on to another *soirée* equally crowded and uncomfortable. The great thing for men, and for some women too, is to be seen at several of these parties on the same night.

If one desires to show a person particular civility one does not merely invite him to these big crushes, but he is begged to "come and have tea." Heaven help the travellers who, visiting England after me, shall experience such hospitality as this! Nothing is more boring, for French people at least, than these assemblies. To every twenty or five-and-twenty women, there are, perhaps, two men. The talk is usually about what they had for dinner and what they are going to have for supper. I remember that at one of these tea-parties a lady sitting next to me talked at great length about the "beautiful" potatoes and the "capital" beefsteak which she had had for dinner, mentioning also the "pain in her stomach" which had resulted from such a repast!

This word "pain," which we only use in a moral sense, seemed to me utterly absurd in its connection with physical suffering; nor were the expressions "beautiful potatoes" and "capital beefsteak" less droll. Yet if it is difficult for a young woman not to laugh at things so totally different from all to which she has been accustomed, it would be most unjust to judge English society by trifles of this sort. If timidity or bashfulness seems to paralyse the means

of many, they are none the less excellent women, and often one meets those who are both witty and accomplished. It has been said (and with truth) that, with the exception of the Court circle, morals in England are purer than in any other country. Yet it would be wrong to infer from this that women of other nationalities were less virtuous.

In France they enjoy great liberty; they pay calls and receive visits without their husband; they go to balls and theatres without his escort; in short, the well-behaved have only themselves to thank for their virtue. In England, a young woman never goes out walking or to the play by herself; she is always surrounded by guardians, who never relax their watchfulness.

This kind of life, so well calculated to ensure domestic peace and concord, is for women a safeguard. The morals of a country that adopts such customs must necessarily be pure, yet the individuals themselves need not be superior. One must never forget that men, and, above all, women, are only the result of the circumstances in which they find themselves placed. So true is this, that if you isolate a Frenchwoman and an Englishwoman from all protection, the Frenchwoman will in herself find greater force to resist temptation than an Englishwoman if severed from all that forms her customary shield.



## CHAPTER XI

*Beauty of Englishwomen—English and French women compared—Children and widows—Girls and their liberty—The poet Shandy—Paternal authority in England—London houses—Luxury and squalor—The playhouses—Italian opera in London—A masked ball—English mirth and French gravity—The Briton's mania for change—Queen Caroline, queen of the mob—Caricatures of Bergami and herself—The Queen at Hammersmith—Alderman Hood—The Queen's costume—Grotesque attire of the Hammersmith Court ladies—The Queen's humiliation—Her illness and death—Cause for this—Patience of the English troops—Insolence and cowardice of the mob—I visit a brewery—Brunel, my compatriot.*

As a rule Englishwomen are good-looking. One cannot judge of this by the few travellers who visit the Continent; but go, on some fine Sunday morning in spring, and walk on the beautiful turf in Kensington gardens, beneath the cool green shade of the trees, and there you may form a just opinion of the good looks of the women. Their morning dress, stripped of all the ornaments which at night time they put on to excess, and which gives them an air of bad style, is simpler and more in keeping with their beauty.

There is a marked difference between Frenchwomen and Englishwomen. At a distance of ten feet all the women walking in the gardens of the Tuileries look pretty; their graceful figures, tasteful dress, and bright eyes make them seem charming *at a distance*. But if they come closer, the illusion vanishes; not one in ten may really claim to be styled pretty.

In Kensington Gardens, on the contrary, at the distance of ten feet not one woman looks pretty, for they are often without grace and always badly dressed. But, on approaching them, you are surprised at the charm of their faces, the delicacy of their features, and, above all, the clearness of their complexion, which looks lovelier by daylight than by candle-light. The children are handsomer than those of any other country. It is true that in no other country are they so well cared for. I do not remember who the writer was that said that Englishwomen are like animals, whose fondness only lasts while their young have need of them; they disown them afterwards. Without actually endorsing this opinion I must say that there is some truth in it. I have seen several English widows marry again, entirely forgetful of their children's interests. In France such instances are far rarer.

It is a common thing, in England, for young ladies to go and stay for several months with friends,

their mother being in no way uneasy at their absence. It is mainly among the men that I failed to notice that trustful intimacy which often exists between a father and his sons. In England, when the latter reach adolescence, they are very respectful but very cold towards their parents. In short, my visit to this country caused me to remember "the poet Shandy's" horrible explanation of the love of grandfathers for their grandchildren, when he says that fathers only look upon their children as greedy heirs; and that this is why a grandfather is so fond of his grandchildren, because he regards them as the enemies of his enemies. If there be any country in which such a theory could find supporters, assuredly it is England, although generally in every country childhood is the period which inspires parents with the deepest attachment to their offspring.

And, if eager to analyse still further, may we not find the reason for this in the absolute control which English parents have over their children, such control in a measure identifying the last-named with themselves, and begetting a sort of interest in all their actions? When the children acquire freedom of thought and conduct, when the young generation no longer counts upon parental support, but relies upon itself for success, such interest wanes.

On my arrival in London I was struck by the way in which the houses are built. All these little

doors made me wonder where the grand folk lived, as most of the houses seemed fit for tradespeople, and I kept looking about for mansions like ours. After a while I discovered that, despite their difference externally, some of the houses were quite as sumptuous and as elegant as our own.

The streets of London are fine, broad, and regularly constructed, with pavements<sup>a</sup> on either side, which make them very convenient for foot passengers. Such streets are intersected by handsome squares, many with charming gardens in their centre, to which only inhabitants of the square have access. The houses being built of brick, and the coal smoke, give London a somewhat dismal look, especially at night. No one walks out after dinner; all business is done in the morning. One goes to a party or the play, but in a carriage, and as the number of such pleasure-seekers is in a very small proportion to the whole population, the streets and squares at night-time wear a most mournful aspect.

Our brilliant *cafés*, which offer a meeting-place for the leisured of all classes, are in London unknown; thus Englishmen who visit Paris are always enchanted with the stir and life of our boulevards.

The London playhouses are all of them very handsome structures. Ladies always go in full dress; thus the general effect of such assemblies is most imposing. A well-dressed woman runs no risk, as

The face of the man on the barrel did not change perceptibly, but there was a trifle more life in his voice when he spoke. "You are Arbuthnot? Of course you would be Arbuthnot. I might have guessed it."

"Then for God's sake, Timmy, tell that blighter behind me to put down his gun. I'll take my medicine when it comes, but I'd like to tell *you* something. You're a clever chap with a future, and I've got something to say to you about the Gran Seco which you ought to hear. Give me five minutes."

There was a protest, but the sphinx nodded. "Give him five minutes," he said and took out his watch.

The prisoner began to talk in his compelling way, and unconsciously the interest of his executioners awakened. Being on the edge of death, he had no reticences. He divulged the whole tale of the revolution, and he made a good story of it. He told of Blenkiron's coming to the Gran Seco, of the slow sapping of the loyalty of the Mines Police, of the successful propaganda among the technical staff, of the organising of the Indian pueblas, in which he claimed a modest share. The others dropped their pistol-hands and poked forward their heads to listen. The five minutes lengthened to six, to eight, to ten, and he still held his audience. He addressed himself to the man on the barrel, and sometimes he lowered his voice till the doorkeeper took a step nearer.

Then he became more confidential, and his voice dropped further. "How do you think it was managed? A miracle? No, a very simple secret which none of you clever folk discovered. We had a base and you never knew it. Go into the pueblas and the old men will speak of a place which they call Uasini Maconoa. That means the Courts of the Morning—Los Patios de la Mañana. Where do you think it is? Listen, and I will tell you."

They listened, but only for his words, while the speaker was listening for another sound which he seemed at last to have detected. He suddenly caught two of the heads bent forward, those of Radin and Molinoff, and brought them crashing together. The doorkeeper could not shoot,

carrying her basket, offers its contents for sale ; a watchman, lantern in hand, deafens you with his rattle. In one corner, a schottische is danced ; in another, a waltz ; elsewhere, a French *contre-danse* is going on. From such multifarious orchestras noise most discordant results, which—blended with the cries and speeches of the maskers—forms a veritable pandemonium.

This ball completely upset my notions with regard to British gravity. I noticed, moreover, that they seemed to search for pleasure far more than we do. Perhaps their efforts are in proportion to the difficulty they experience in finding it. They pay a great deal for amusement, yet are not always amused. Hence the perpetual need for change, which the English of all classes feel, and which drives them from place to place incessantly.

No doubt, travelling is pleasant if one has a good carriage, and servants to pack and unpack one's luggage, and who, by sparing us all petty inconveniences, allow us to enjoy the beautiful scenery and interesting cities through which we pass.

But of the great number of English who travel for what they call their pleasure, only a few make use of their carriage. The rest are courageous enough to stuff themselves into diligences, and so scamper across the world, from inn to hostelry and from hostelry to inn. I am at a loss to conceive

how they who have so many of what they call "comforts" can submit to spend a fourth of their lives in these lugubrious vehicles, and another fourth in hotels, all because they desire change of air and of scene. Such change of air is seemingly indispensable to them; it is a rooted national prejudice that this change is necessary to their health. We French, who are born,\* live and die in the same place, find such a necessity passing strange. Often when meeting one of these huge, lumbering conveyances, I have felt pity for the wretched folk wedged therein. I can well conceive that if obliged to travel from one place to another one would be glad of such carriages. But to go in these for choice, for pleasure, this is what I cannot understand. To call such journeys pleasure-trips seems to me an abuse of the word. I should prefer to style them cruel penances.

In the course of a second visit to England I witnessed all the scenes incidental upon the return of Queen Caroline, her sojourn and her death. They used to call her Queen of the mob, and in truth this was a title that seemed to fit her exactly. She never appeared but her carriage was surrounded by a huge crowd of roughs and ragamuffins of the most appalling type. I was able to note, too, how inconsequent and contradictory are the suffrages of the lower classes, and I knew what value to set upon the vote of the mass.

When the Queen arrived in London I was stationed in St. James's Street to see her pass by. Underneath my window was a print-shop, filled with caricatures of the Queen and Bergami. They were in all styles, yet all had the one intention of covering her with ignominy. I thought every moment that the huge crowd of Londoners that lined the roadway along which their beloved Queen was about to pass would break into this shop and destroy such outrageous caricatures of their idol. Oh dear no! Such pictures afforded great amusement to all, and whiled away the time preceding the Queen's arrival. Some persons got on the shoulders of others to see them better.

When Her Majesty passed, the pleasure derived from such pictures of her vices did not hinder them from turning round to cry, "Caroline for ever!" To judge by such acclamation one would have thought she was the most beloved of princesses, and one who deserved such homage to the full.

This example should teach Sovereigns exactly what the cheers which they love to hear along their passage are worth. During the Queen's stay at Hammersmith, in the house decorated by the Margrave of Anspach, she received deputations from all the trades-guilds of London, who went thither by boat. Being curious to see this numerous "Court," of such an original type, I was taken there by one



of the Queen's household, who placed me in a room adjoining the presence-chamber, the door of which was left open. Only one lady and four gentlemen were with the Queen, Alderman Hood being one of these. She wore a muslin, gold-embroidered gown, of the usual type, but from her shoulders hung a large striped muslin shawl, in the form of a mantle. Worn by a tall woman, such drapery would have looked graceful enough, but the Queen was short and dumpy, so that this style of gown made her look stouter still.

As head-dress she wore a turban of the same stuff, that entirely concealed her hair, with the exception of two corkscrew curls, one on each side. As, however, these ringlets were fair, they evidently did not belong to her, but contrasted disagreeably with her dark complexion. About her face and person there was nothing distinguished. A diamond necklace, with earrings to match, completed her costume. On landing at the river-entrance to the house, each corporation sent its deputies to offer her their homage and kiss hands. So numerous were these delegates that the ceremony lasted a very long while. One can easily understand that a cobbler in his best Sunday clothes would be delighted to say that he had been presented to the Queen, and to boast of having kissed her hand. Thus these Hammersmith processions lasted until she had re-

viewed the entire populace. The most grotesque figures of all were cut by the women. Wishing to ape the Court ladies, who, in England, wear quantities of feathers, they had simply covered their heads with these. Some were yards long; skyscrapers that put a finishing touch to their weird costumes. When such ladies went to pay their respects to the Queen they always went in a body, usually a whole district at a time. They drove in open carriages, and, to avoid extra expense, the vehicle was crammed with as many persons as it could hold. To facilitate this, everybody stood up. The pageant of all these tufted females, with their forests of feathers, jammed into carriages, often drawn by four horses, was really well worth seeing.

The day on which the deputation arrived by water, these newly-fledged courtiers almost entirely destroyed the bushes and shrubs in the grounds. They climbed up the trees, whose boughs broke beneath their weight; they trampled down the beds; they rooted up the flowers. If further processions of this sort had taken place in the park, most likely not a tree, not a leaf would have been left. While the Queen was receiving homage from this motley throng I meditated upon her degradation, and I said to myself that the necessity of surrounding herself with such a Court as that, so different from the one which she ought to have had, must,

to her, have been poignant punishment for her misconduct.

I saw her again at the King's coronation, when she tried to be present at this ceremony, and appeared at six o'clock in the morning at the long corridor leading from Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey. The officers on duty informed her that their instructions were not to allow her to enter. As, however, she insisted, in spite of their respectful refusal, they deemed it inadvisable to employ force; and, lowering the points of their swords, they let her pass. But a little further on a posse of constables proved less gallant; they blocked her passage, and she was obliged to turn back. To reach her carriage she had to walk a good way along the corridor, amid the groans and hooting of the spectators, who filled the vast amphitheatres erected on either side. They yelled at her that she had got up too early, that she ought to go back to bed with Bergami, heaping countless insults upon her of the same kind. Fury and rage were written on her features, that soon became deadly pale; her lips trembled, and it was with difficulty that she reached her carriage.

I felt convinced that the illness by which she was seized some days afterwards, and which brought her to the tomb, had its origin in the anguish and mortification of that dreadful moment, and I cannot

imagine why she thus exposed herself to such public shame, knowing, as she did perfectly well, that she would not be allowed to enter Westminster Abbey.

I had witnessed her arrival in London, as well as the principal events of her last stay in that city. I now wished to attend her funeral.

The weather was dreadful; rain fell in torrents. I went to New Road, where the procession was to pass. This circuitous route had been chosen, as it was thought undesirable that the funeral should pass through the main streets. This order being opposed to the popular wish, rioting ensued, and several people lost their lives. I might probably have been of their number if I had not told my coachman to drive on from the Tottenham Court Road, my first position, and go a little further. It was just at this place, where we had first stopped, that several people were killed.

Nor was my second stopping-place altogether free from danger. Hardly had my carriage reached the spot than the funeral procession passed, preceded by a detachment of cavalry. Incensed that this had been made to traverse the outskirts of the town, the mob abused the soldiers and covered them with mud. It was then that I had occasion to admire the discipline and patience of the English soldiers; they remained impassive and cold as marble. But at last, when stones were flung as well as mud,

and a trooper's helmet was knocked off, the men, using the flat of their sabres, dealt their assailants several blows.

In a moment the mob took flight. My carriage probably looked a likely place of shelter, and instantly the horses, the box-seat and the carriage itself were overwhelmed by the rabble. I was almost suffocated.

Fortunately the procession which had paused for a moment now went on again, and we managed to free ourselves. A lady who accompanied me was so terrified that I would not prolong her agitation further, but told the coachman not to wait until the hearse had passed, but to drive down a side street which was close at hand.

As I have interrupted the account of my first visit to England, in order to relate certain details about Queen Caroline which occurred many years later, I will record another far pleasanter experience of mine belonging to the same period, the year 1821. I mention it here for the benefit of compatriots, who, if going to England, may care to follow my example.

Among the establishments that foreigners ought certainly to visit, the brewery of Mr. Meux seems to stand in the first rank. To give an idea of the extent and importance of this establishment, I will merely mention one of its minor departments, that of the vats where the beer is kept. They are eighty in number, and the smallest and least ex-

pensive of these cost four thousand pounds, or a hundred thousand francs. This vast and splendid brewery is worked throughout by steam. After admiring all the details, when I was shown the little wheel that produced such amazing results I eagerly asked the name of the inventor. One must love one's native country, as I do, in order to understand the pleasure which I felt when, surrounded by several Englishmen, all proud of their industry and skill, I was told that the inventor was M. Brunel, a Frenchman! This man, who, justly enough, met with such appreciation and admiration in England, originally meant to use his great talents in the service of his own country. Being repulsed by Bonaparte, however, he was obliged to let the English profit by his industry and his genius.

This brewery of Mr. Meux, in itself, merits a journey to London in order to inspect it. I will now go back to the incidents of my first journey.

## CHAPTER XII

*The two houses of the Londoner—English nobility—I visit Blenheim and Stowe—The picture galleries—Venus in petticoats—The classic stomach—Park Place—Lord Harcourt's country seat—Oxford—English and French youth—The English students—Lord Albemarle's witticism—Classes and masses—The affectation of French and English women—Different causes for this—Cheltenham—Bath—Clifton—Windsor—Richmond—English turf—Its beauty, and the cause—I return to France.*

THE city of London is of immense extent. Not only does each family occupy a house by itself, but most people possess two. All persons whom their profession keeps in town have another house in the suburbs, which cover several miles. These suburban residences have little gardens in front of them, separated by a railing from the roadway. The nobility come to London in April, and leave again early in July. Thus, for nine months in the year, the fashionable quarter is totally deserted. Very often, one does not meet a single person of whom one might ask the way. A thing which struck me each time I visited England, was the sort of grim silence, of

taciturnity, common not merely to human beings, but also to animals. The dogs are more subdued; they bark less; the horses, too, are gentler. Those same horses, if taken to the Continent, soon lose this quality. In London, the noise of the carriages makes such a criticism inapplicable; but if one lives in a provincial town one is struck by the all-prevailing silence of things. On evenings in summer French people (especially in the provinces) walk about and laugh and talk, making thus a sort of buzzing which is heard afar. Each time I crossed the Channel this Anglo-Saxon hush impressed me.

After enjoying the pleasures of London for awhile, I desired to visit certain places in the country which foreigners never omit to see. I first went to Blenheim, Lord Spencer's residence.<sup>1</sup> This magnificent structure was built by Queen Anne as a gift to the famous Duke of Marlborough.

Its architecture has been criticised as heavy and massive; but what to many might seem a defect I thought was deserving of praise. A castle given as a national reward should, by its solidity, be able to defy the hand of Time. Generations pass, yet this monument, the work of men's hands, shall survive them, telling posterity how magnificently

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1 Query.



the British Government could reward a faithful servant. I made haste to leave Blenheim, for all the trophies and the grand column set up to glorify Marlborough only made me sad. A Frenchwoman could hardly feel gay in such a place.

I then proceeded to Stowe, the Marquis of Buckingham's seat. Here no painful memories could underlie my admiration. The park is one of the most beautiful I ever saw, and the castle possesses some fine pictures. Of these, it is astonishing, indeed, to see the vast number that England owns.

Talking of pictures, I remember seeing one once in a London house, whose owner had a notoriously fine collection. It was by an English painter named West, whom his compatriots are wont to place in the first rank, and it represented the death of Adonis. Venus is seated, and wears a "petticoat"—as the English call it—of yellow muslin, with a flowered pattern upon it. Adonis lies at her feet; one of his hands rests upon her knee. I much admired this hand; it was so thoroughly dead, and in such complete contrast to that of Venus which is supporting the lovely youth. But there my admiration ended. I am a woman, not an artist, and I cannot pretend to judge with authority; yet a Venus in a petticoat, *a muslin petticoat*, seemed to me something so utterly strange

and new! Where, however, my sense of humour almost overcame me was when the master of the house, who professed great admiration for this picture, pointed out its beauties to me, and said, "Do look, madam, at the stomach of Adonis; it is classic."

I confess, to my shame, that as yet I do not know the meaning of a classic stomach. I shyly admitted as much to my host, observing that this epithet was usually applied to garments, and that, in this respect, the vestment of Venus seemed to me to differ considerably from classic models. But my remark in nowise lessened the admiration of this amateur of "classic stomachs"; he talked on about them for an hour.

Among those residences which deserve the attention of travellers, I may mention Park Place, belonging to Lord Malmesbury; Lord Pembroke's country seat, remarkable for many fine statues; and Lord Harcourt's charming place, the grounds of which are well worth visiting. The last-named is situated near Oxford—a town famed for the beauty of its colleges, churches and libraries. Merit of this type was hardly to my taste; but what specially impressed me was the prevailing air of antiquity. I seemed to be living centuries ago, in a long-forgotten world. It is in this town and in Cambridge that the youth of England complete their education after leaving school.

This custom, as I think, accounts for the difference usually perceptible between the manners and habits of Englishmen and Frenchmen. In France, for instance, a 'young man leaves school at the age of seventeen or eighteen, and returns to his home, when he is introduced to his parents' friends. His manners are thus formed by the company he keeps, and the society of ladies gives him that polished, graceful address which specially distinguishes the Frenchman. This second education is, perhaps, that which most influences his life. It is in the time of adolescence that our tastes and inclinations are shaped. This is the age when our passions awake, and from everything about us we receive impressions that require to be carefully guided. That is why parents, I think, ought not to leave their children's first knowledge of things good and evil to chance.

The first years of a young Englishman's youth are always spent at the University. Here lads live together, deprived of the society of ladies and of their parents. Study cannot take up all their time, and not a few meet to dispel dulness with the aid of sundry bottles of wine. The propensity with which adult Englishmen are charged undoubtedly originates at college in this way; the freedom of their life there makes their manners so different from those of our youths.

of timidity, which suits women excellently well, and makes them specially attractive.

On leaving Oxford, I visited Cheltenham, a pretty place where one takes the waters, and Bath, a fashionable winter resort. Bath is a handsome, well-built town, but, at the time I saw it, was sadly dull. I went thence to Clifton, a pretty village near Bristol, but a melancholy place to live in, because of the many youthful consumptive patients who are sent thither to die. Of course, I did not leave England without visiting Windsor Castle; the view from its terraces rivals that of Saint-Germain. I also went to Richmond, with its famous park; this, indeed, deserves to be seen. Richmond was the last place I visited, and the recollection of its verdurous slopes and cool, leafy glades, made me feel a deep sense of disappointment when I got back to my home to find that the hot August sun had dried up my lawns, and that all was arid and barren. I could appreciate the difference in the two climates when my gardener told me that for three months there had been no rain whatever, whereas, in England, it had rained almost every day. Drought, however, was not the sole cause for disappointment which awaited me on my return.

## CHAPTER XIII

*Unseen and expensive restorations—My pleasant neighbours—  
I meet Madame de Staël again—M. Melzi and M. Godin  
—The fair Greek—Marriage and divorce—Cambacérès  
Sièyes and his silence—Madame de Chevreuse—The  
Emperor's severity—She dies—The death of the Duke  
d'Enghien—Moreau's trial—The Polignacs—Quarrel  
between Madame Moreau and Josephine—Toulangeon and  
Crillon visit M. de Canteleu—The inflexible Moniteur—  
Death of Madame de Canteleu—Josephine desires a divorce  
—Canteleu's sage advice—Lucien and Josephine—Bonaparte  
shuts her out—Tears and reconciliation—Napoleon's super-  
stition—Josephine's cleverness—The discreet confidant—  
Josephine's gratitude—I am recommended to her by M. de  
Canteleu.*

THE architect to whom I had entrusted the alterations in my house took advantage of my absence entirely to upset my garden, making it a veritable monument of bad taste. One would have said that the alleys had been designed by a snake, so devious and winding were these. By all means let an alley be curved, if trees or some other obstacle make such a bend expedient, but otherwise I think a garden-walk should be straight. The most pro-

voking thing was that such alterations had involved enormous expense, which was all the heavier seeing that all such unsightly changes had in their turn to be changed.

My country-house was near that of M. and Madame de Lecouteulx de Canteleu, and I often profited by such pleasant neighbours. Both husband and wife were as good as they were agreeable, and one always met clever people at their house. Here I again encountered Madame de Staël, armed with all her manifold accomplishments; she often used to come there with M. de Melzi, president of the Ligurian Republic. The intellectual superiority and charming conversational powers of this clever man were well worth the efforts made by Madame de Staël to keep at their level. Such mutual rivalry thus made their society thoroughly delightful. At this house I met M. Godin, who had been attached to the French Embassy at Constantinople, and brought back with him a Greek wife, famed for her beauty, though she had nothing extraordinary beyond a pair of very handsome eyes. She knew but little French, and hearing constant allusion to her "fine eyes" she thought the words were inseparable, and once, when her eyes hurt her, she told us, in the drollest way, that she had "something the matter with her fine eyes!"

The story of her marriage is a singular one.

M. Godin, when *attaché* at Constantinople, went once with his mistress to a ball, at which almost all the ambassadresses were present. Soon there was such a commotion that he had to leave hurriedly, taking the lady with him. Summoning certain witnesses, he conducted these to the Tree of Liberty planted in the embassy courtyard, and swore, in their presence, to make his mistress, there and then, his lawful wife. Then he returned to the ball, where he presented Madame Godin to everybody. Since then, this marriage, thus lightly contracted, has been cancelled by a divorce, and Madame Godin is now the Duchesse de G. People now quote her exemplary piety and ceaseless acts of charity; her life, indeed, is said to be a succession of good works.

Cambacérès occasionally came to M. de Cantaleu's, where he talked but little. Whenever he did, though, his remarks were serious and full of thought. In mentioning him, one is reminded how much men ought to fear ridicule. It was ridicule that utterly neutralized the effect of his mental force, of which he had much. To be sure of this, one has only to open his "Memoirs of the Institute," which contain addresses of his that are admirable, alike for their eloquence as for their depth of thought.

I also met Sièyes there sometimes. As I take it, he must have felt as grateful to his reputation as the man who said to his coat, "Oh coat, my

coat, how deeply I am obliged to you." Sièyes lived upon Mirabeau's witty speech, who affirmed "that his silence was a calamity for the State." This epigram made his reputation far more than aught which he said or did since.

We soon lost the society of Madame de Staël. The First Consul forbade her to remain in Paris or in France, and no entreaties could induce him to alter his resolution. Later on, he showed equal obstinacy in the case of Madame de Chevreuse, whom he exiled because she refused to act as lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Spain, at Fontainebleau. When this young and charming woman was dying of consumption, at Caen, her one and only wish was to come back to Paris and die there. The Emperor being approached on the subject, he asked, "Is she very bad?"

"Yes, Sire, she cannot possibly live very long."

"Oh, well," rejoined Napoleon, "she may just as well die at Caen as at Paris."

And, in fact, soon after this cruel speech she died. Undoubtedly she must have possessed rare and lovely qualities, for she had many friends. The devotion of her mother-in-law, the Duchesse de Luynes, who followed her everywhere when in exile, is well known. I only met her in society at her own parties, which were most brilliant. She was a most agreeable and popular woman. Her success as a beauty



always seemed to me extraordinary. People found her charming to look at, yet, if one examined her features separately, she had every feature requisite to make her plain.\* Her hair was red; she always wore a wig; her eyes were small; her mouth very large and ill-shaped. Her complexion, certainly, was very white, but it was covered with red spots. Yet her whole appearance exercised a charm of its own, and her figure and bearing were perfect.

The death of the Duke d'Enghien, Moreau's trial, as well as that of the de Polignacs struck terror to all hearts. I often regret that I never transcribed a conversation which passed in the corridors of La Malmaison, the morning after the Duke's death, between the First Consul and M. de Canteleu. The latter found it so interesting that he wrote it down and let me read it. I can, however, recollect one of the reasons given by Napoleon for this judicial murder. "I wished to convince Europe that all that is going on in France is no longer mere child's-play." That was his exact phrase. He also tried to defend himself, though very badly, from a charge of being jealous of Moreau, whose trial provoked a touching dispute between the two de Polignacs. The younger begged to be allowed to expiate his brother's alleged crime. His brother, so he said, was a married man; thus his life was more precious than his own. But the brother, far from accepting

such devotion, sought to make his brother's youth an excuse which might save his life.

If a dispute such as this had occurred at the Greek or Roman era, poets would not have omitted to seize such a grand subject and transmit it to posterity. This fine scene passed before our very eyes, yet not a poet nor a painter has brought his art to bear upon so touching and noble a theme. When speaking of the Moreau trial one is naturally led to refer to the motives of his rupture with General Bonaparte, and one is astonished that a cause almost unperceived, so slight was it, should have produced such effects.

Madame Moreau and her mother, Madame Hulot, were at Plombières, as well as Madame Bonaparte. The latter had the bad habit of putting powder on her face, the effect of which is speedily marred by sun or wind. Returning from a ride, Madame Bonaparte found Mesdames Hulot and Moreau had called to pay her a visit. Knowing what ravages in her false complexion must have been made by the sun, and not wishing to appear in such a plight before these ladies, she went quickly through the room where they were without stopping to salute them, being anxious to repair the damage to her complexion before she welcomed them. They, however, were furious at being kept waiting like this, and went off in a huff. From this moment there was a cool-

ness, indeed, a bitterness, which nothing could remedy, and these ladies got General Moreau to share it.

Once, when dining with M. de Canteleu, who was then a senator, at his residence in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, I was much amused at the following incident.

The guests included the Vicomte de Toulangeon and M. de Crillon, who, together with M. de Canteleu, had been members of the Constitutional body. During their talk M. de Crillon reminded the Vicomte of certain opinions of his now no longer in harmony with those which he actually professed. The Vicomte, in defence, sought to quote certain of M. de Crillon's speeches, while M. de Canteleu went to fetch an old volume of the *Moniteur*, that terrible monument of our political follies and caprices. Nothing was more amusing than the way the three gentlemen strove to find printed *data*, which the others were desirous to destroy.

About the period of this dinner-party Madame de Canteleu was very ill. Seized with a chest complaint, the gravity of which she sought to hide, this excellent woman, so generally beloved, fell a victim to it, to the deep regret of all her friends. Her husband once found himself in a very delicate position, at the time of Bonaparte's return from Egypt. During the General's protracted absence, Josephine,

ill-advised, no doubt, and urged thereto by some motive or other, conceived the idea of getting a divorce, and had already filed a petition. Her esteem for M. de Canteleu prompted her to consult him in the matter. He pointed out that, supposing the General were lost and never came back, his name alone would be for her a halo, entitling her to esteem and regard, which, if divorced, she would never enjoy. In short, he persuaded her to desist with such eloquence that she tore up her divorce petition in his presence, and there was never any question of it afterwards. Very few persons ever got to hear this curious tale. M. de Canteleu never alluded to it; but he confided it to me in strict confidence, as a friend. His death and that of Josephine permit me to publish it and affirm its truth.

When Bonaparte returned, his wife was not without misgivings. Her abortive divorce-petition was known but to few, yet she had reason to believe that the General's relatives had an inkling of it, and she was certain that their malevolence towards herself would prompt them to profit by this chance of prejudicing him still further against her. Therefore, when going to meet him, she wished to be accompanied by someone who could protect her. A man so generally esteemed as M. de Canteleu would prove, as she believed, her best support. At

the first news of Bonaparte's arrival, she hastened to M. de Carleu and begged him to go with her. He declined the honour, however, not knowing what the General might have heard about his wife, nor how he would receive her. Feeling thus uncertain, he was not particularly anxious to constitute himself her cavalier. He pointed out to Josephine that she did not know by which route the General was coming, that she would doubtless miss him, and that the best plan would be to await his arrival in Paris. She was not of this opinion, and accordingly started off by herself, though she missed meeting him after all. Lucien was more fortunate. He took the right road, and lost no time in prejudicing Bonaparte against his wife. So successfully did he do this that, on reaching the Rue de la Victoire, the General placed all Madame Bonaparte's effects with the hall-porter, who had orders to deny her admission.

Yet his love for her was not wholly extinct; and, when she returned from her fruitless journey, her efforts to justify herself and regain her sway over him found in his heart a powerful advocate, which reunited them once more.

On several occasions Josephine adroitly took advantage of Napoleon's superstitious nature. Without being intellectual, she yet had a certain cleverness of her own. Sometimes she would say to him

“They talk about your star; but it is mine that influences it. It is of me that great things are predicted.”

Her confidence in M. de Canteleu was never betrayed, nor did he ever make the slightest allusion to this episode of the projected divorce, being courtier enough not to let her imagine that the least trace of it remained in his memory.

When the Empire was established and a Court had to be formed, it was M. de Canteleu who suggested to Josephine that I should be chosen as one of the ladies-in-waiting, as much in remembrance of my father as by my husband's connection with the first families of the former Court. It was to M. de Canteleu, therefore, that I owed my position at Court.

## CHAPTER XIV

*Supplement to the Mayence journal—The Princess de Craon—Prince de B. and his two sons—Unsolicited favours of Napoleon—Motives for their acceptance—Coldness of Louis XVIII. and irritation of the Prince de B.—M. d'Aubusson—Prince and Chamberlain—The Princess writes to the Emperor—Madame de B.'s sarcasm—Madame de Lavalette—Josephine's face-powder—The Doctor is puzzled—Rouge and pearl powder—The 14th of July—Portrait of M. Denon—The Empress goes to Aix-la-Chapelle—M. Deschamps—His theories as to diet—We travel through the Ardennes—Josephine's alarm—Her kind thought of me—Madame Saint-Hilaire is upset—Her fussiness and the Empress's simplicity.*

IT is here that my diary of our journey to Mayence should by right have its place, but it has already appeared in the first volume of Constant's "Memoirs," so I merely supplement it by sundry details.

On my taking the oath of allegiance at Saint-Cloud, I met M. d'Aubusson, and we returned to Paris together. I desired to call upon the Princess de C., and he wished to see her also, but we were both afraid of what she might say respecting our

new honours, and we determined to pay her a visit together, the better to ward off the sarcasms that we expected.

The Princess de C. is one of the few who have never at any time despaired of the cause of the Bourbons, or of their eventual return to power. That she was devotedly attached to them is well known. Her son, Prince de B., shared her opinions, strongly condemning everything connected with Napoleon's Court. When I was appointed Court lady, he was one of the persons I was most afraid of meeting at his mother's house.

The way in which the Emperor contrived to conquer his hostility and win him over to his side deserves mention. Napoleon counted much upon surrounding himself with the leading families of the former Court. He began by getting hold of their children, the wishes of their parents proving powerless to free them from his authority.

Such and such a person had just paid ten thousand francs to find a substitute for his son, if claimed by the conscription, yet the very next day his child is torn from his arms and appointed to the guard of honour, to pave the high-roads of Russia with his bones.

Charles and Edmond, the two sons of the Prince de B., were still very young. They had not yet completed their education, and in their extreme



youth their father hoped to find a safeguard against Bonaparte's omnipotence. This, however, was a vain hope. His name, his high social rank, and the spotless reputation of the Princess his wife, all combined to make the Emperor endeavour, by every means in his power, to win this family over to his side.

He began by presenting his sons with commissions in the army. Under a government like Napoleon's it was difficult to avoid obeying such a command. Prince de B. had recourse to Fouché. This minister, in the dangerous times of the Revolution, had rendered great services to certain Court personages, notably to Madame de B., wife of the Marshal. It was most natural, therefore, that the Prince should apply to him to prevent his children from being taken from him. He pointed out their extreme youth to the minister, and asked for time at least sufficient for the completion of their education.

Surely all the efforts which the Prince de B. then made to prevent his sons, as long as possible, from entering the army shows how disgusted he was with Bonaparte's government, for personal bravery was a distinguishing trait of this noble family, and later on Prince Charles and Prince Edmond gave brilliant proof of this.

Fouché, after learning the Prince's views, was

employed by the Emperor to win him over, and to make him accept a post as chamberlain, the Princess, his wife, being appointed lady-in-waiting.

For some months past the Imperial household had been made to include some of the most distinguished members of the old Court families. By accepting office the Prince was not establishing a precedent; he was only doing as others had done. Hopes were held out to him of the restoration of property, still unsold, which belonged to the Duke d'Harcourt, the Princess's grandfather. The restitution of these vast lands was of great interest to his children, and most important also to his wife's two sisters, the Duchess de C. and the Princess de C. Would he have been justified in sacrificing such joint interests by an obstinate refusal? No; he was bound to accept, and he did so.

Upon Louis XVIII.'s return he was coldly treated by that monarch, and not included in the Chamber of Peers. This wounded him; his naturally cold, haughty disposition resented such a slight. If I had been in his place I think that I should have felt highly flattered. If the King showed greater severity towards him than towards the other persons who, like himself, had composed the Emperor's Court, it was doubtless because His Majesty considered him of more importance than anybody else. This is the construction which, as I think, Prince

de B. ought to have put upon the King's sulkiness, but he did not do so.

Madame de B.'s sarcasm was greatly feared. She had a way of saying satirical things which made them doubly piquant.

During the emigration the Duke de Laval found his exile at Altona vastly tedious, and, one evening, said that he should like to return to France.

"What?" cried Madame de B., "you, my Lord Duke, you want to go to Paris? What would you do there? In what society would you mix? I suppose you know that titles are not allowed, so how would you have yourself announced in a drawing-room?"

The old Duke proudly raised his head at the remembrance of his noble ancestors, saying, "I should have myself announced as Anne<sup>1</sup> de Montmorency. This title is worth a good many others!"

"Oh, Duke," rejoined Madame de B., "you must mean *Zebra* de Montmorency!"

This quip can only be appreciated by those who knew the old Duke.

When the Emperor formed the Empress's household twelve Court ladies were appointed, a maid of honour and a mistress of the robes, the latter being Madame de Lavalette, Josephine's niece. She fully

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<sup>1</sup> âne.

thought that she would have the complete supervision of the Empress's toilette, and settle what dresses the Court ladies were to wear at different functions. The title she possessed might perhaps have led her to think this. But Josephine, who made dressing a real business, and who, moreover, considered that her niece was wanting in taste, told her that she was merely to have the name of mistress of the robes; Her Majesty intended to choose the stuffs for her gowns herself, and would not let anyone else undertake this task.

Perhaps it was a mistake for one in so exalted a position as hers to do so; she should have left it to some of her household. Josephine dressed very well; her figure was charming; there was grace in her every movement, yet her face, when I knew her, was far from comely. I think her complexion must always have been rather dark, but it had become swarther still owing to her lavish use of face-powder.

It is well known that this preparation is harmful to the skin, that it always scarifies it, if constantly used. This is what happened to the Empress; her chin, in particular, had been so irritated by powder that it was seldom that she could put any on it. She herself used to say that the state of her chin showed the state of her health. When she was not well her face was covered with white powder. Thus,

on enquiring after her health, she would reply, "I'm rather poorly; don't you see I've got a powdered-chin?"

"Powdered-chin," indeed, was a complaint for which, in all gravity, she consulted the German physician at Aix-la-Chapelle. One day the little doctor paid me a visit, and, looking somewhat embarrassed, he mentioned the Empress's health, at last venturing to ask, "Madam, does not Her Majesty use rouge?" This question, asked in a strong German accent, confused me not a little, and I felt greatly inclined to laugh. I saw that the doctor, being daily consulted by Josephine for "powdered-chin," wanted to get at the real facts before prescribing a remedy. He was very short-sighted, but through his spectacles he believed that he could spy something like flour. I replied as a courtier should; and, on leaving me, I do not think he was much the wiser. I begged him not to dose Her Majesty, but to let Nature take its course. Whether he understood me or not I cannot say, but at any rate the Empress kept to her powder. I do not know how it is that women will never admit that they use pearl-powder, though they make no mystery about putting on rouge; I myself have never been able to detect the difference between rouge and pearl-powder.

A grand ceremony was organised at the In-

and on one wall hung a big plan made of a dozen sheets pinned together. It had none of the finish of the products of a Government Map Department, being the work of the Mines surveyors. Each of the men had a small replica, which he compared with the original.

There followed an hour of detailed instruction as to routes and ultimate concentrations. Four points were marked on the big map with red circles. One, lettered Pacheco, lay in the extreme south-west angle of the Gran Seco. Magdalena, the second, was a hundred miles farther north, under the shadow of the peaks called the Spanish Ladies. The third was near the centre of the northern part of the province, the Seco Boreal, and had the surprising name of Fort Castor: while the fourth, Loa, was at the opening of the neck of land which led to the Courts of the Morning.\* The commandos under Escrick were to make for the two latter points, while Peters and his forces, which had been fighting in the Mines sector, had the two former for their objective.

There was also to be a change in the command. Blenkiron, once the city had been surrendered, laid down his duties. The field force in the future would be divided between Escrick and Peters; and, under Castor as generalissimo, the operations as a whole would be directed by him whom the Indians called El Obro.

"I guess we'll keep to that pet name," Blenkiron said. "It sounds good, and kind of solemn. We haven't any use for effete territorial titles in this democratic army, and 'Sandy' is too familiar."

Then he made the men repeat their instructions till each was clear not only about his own task but about the tasks of the others—a vital thing in a far-flung force. After that he lectured them. . . . So far luck had been on their side. Their losses had been small; under estimate in the railway sector, and not thirty per cent. beyond it even after Peters's rash counter-attack. No officer had fallen, and only six had been wounded. One aeroplane, unfortunately, had been brought down, and the pilot and observer, both young

\* See map on end-papers.

should serve as a reply to all the accusations of frivolity constantly brought against them, more from habit than from conviction, for no one can deny that M. Denon's successes were due solely to his graceful wit and polished manners.

A few days after the ceremony at the Invalides Josephine left for Aix-la-Chapelle. Madame de la Rochefoucault and four Court ladies were to form her suite, I being one of the four. The other three were Madame Auguste de Colbert, Madame de Luçay and her daughter. MM. d'Harville, de Foulers, de Beaumont, and d'Aubusson were also in attendance, with M. Deschamps as private secretary.

M. Deschamps was a clever and most agreeable man. When travelling, if the Emperor was away, Josephine dined with all the members of her suite, besides the officer commanding her escort of gendarmes, and the colonel of the troops furnishing a local guard of honour. I often chose my place next to M. Deschamps, for I have always preferred the society of amusing, clever men to that of aristocratic bores. He had sundry droll manias. One, for instance, was that diet had an influence upon our intellectual faculties, and he went so far as to specify the food that made us stupid and the food that allowed our intellects to have full play. He declared that we ought to eat partridges, nourishing meat being consumed in very small quantities, while all

indigestible vegetables were forbidden, as tending to make us very dull-witted. This, then, was his recipe for being clever. I give it here, though I am convinced that nobody will try it, for I have never come across anybody yet who was not thoroughly satisfied with his own cleverness or who wanted to increase it.

When passing through the Ardennes we ran certain risks. The Emperor had settled by which route we were to travel; unfortunately for us this route had only been marked out on the map. It became so bad that, when going down a steep incline, the carriages had to be held up with ropes. Josephine, in alarm, got out, in spite of the rain and the mud. Of all her suite I was the only one who remained in the carriage. I have often noticed that people are afraid of imaginary perils, never giving a thought to those actual ones by which they are continually surrounded. I considered it a real danger to be out in the rain, wet my feet and probably catch a bad cold. The chance of being upset was far less probable. They all praised me for being so brave, but, as it seemed to me, I was only prudent. In society one is not perfectly certain as to the meanings of words; we ought to have a dictionary which should establish their true significance.

When speaking of this journey I ought to



mention a charming attention on the part of Josephine towards myself. When passing near the Luxembourg fortress, she sent her mounted equerry to the window of my carriage, I being close behind her, to point out a structure which they told her General D., my father, had fortified. Nothing could have been more amiable than this message.

When travelling along the bad roads in the Ardennes, the carriage of Madame Saint-Hilaire, first woman of the bed-chamber, was overturned. She did not reach Liège until a day after we did. As soon as her absence was noticed, several of the gendarmes were sent to her relief. But such attentions apparently were considered insufficient by Madame Saint-Hilaire, who was mightily offended that the whole Court had not been upset by her absence, and her fussy airs of self-importance contrasted strangely with the simple, easy bearing of her mistress.

On reaching Aix-la-Chapelle we were all badly lodged in a house hired by the Emperor. After some days, M. Méchin, the Prefect, placed the prefecture at the Empress's disposal, and, with his family, took up his quarters at an inn. All the suite was lodged in houses adjoining the prefecture. I do not know how it was that on this journey M. de Ségur, the *major-domo*, always allotted me apartments in the same house as the Empress. I rarely was lodged elsewhere. This accident (it was nothing more) greatly vexed Madame de L. She had the bad habit of never being ready in time. Whenever we went out for a walk, or were prepared to start, she was always late and delayed us; this greatly vexed Josephine. Indeed, on one occasion she expressed her annoyance pretty plainly, being so gracious as to hold me up as a paragon of punctuality, remarking that I was always most carefully dressed, and yet I was always down first in the drawing-room. Madame de L. replied that this was easy for me, as I always lodged in the palace, or, if not, I was always close by, whereas the servants on days of departure always called her last of all. There was some truth in this, but Madame de L. never sought to stimulate the domestics' zeal by giving them a fee every now and then. Though she was well off, she always tried to shirk every petty expense. Such meanness

made her positively ridiculous. She always got her companions to pay trifling sums for her, pretending that she had no change—only *napoleons*. One merely of her thousand shabby tricks will I narrate. On leaving Cologne, we all of us bought a quantity of *eau-de-cologne* at Jean-Marie Farina's. I kept some in my travelling-bag, and had the rest packed up. Madame de L. did so, too, but she had not kept sufficient. Yet, instead of undoing her box, she kept pestering me to have mine unpacked, and actually sent her maid to ask me for some; and all because she did not want the trouble of unpacking until she got to Paris!

Madame de L. was in a perpetual state of adoration before the Emperor; for all that he said or desired, her attitude was one of abject submission. I don't believe she had a thought of her own. Such mind as she possessed was so mixed up with her admiration that I am sure that she could never have distinguished between the two. Once when she was about to drive to a meet, I heard her say to her daughter, "Do go and change that gown, Lucie; you know that the Emperor does not like that colour." Another day, before going down into the drawing-room, I heard her drilling the girl in her lesson, making her go through her history-extracts, and saying, "The Emperor will ask you questions, and you won't know how to answer

them." It is true that he often used to question the Court ladies, particularly the young ones, and all were dreadfully afraid of giving a wrong answer.

On leaving Bòulogne, the Emperor joined Josephine at Aix-la-Chapelle. Among those who accompanied him was Monsieur de R. To him one might point as a specimen of the perfect courtier; not, however, as defined by the Duke d'Orléans, who said that "to be a perfect courtier, one must have no honour and no temper." Monsieur de R. was first chamberlain, and as such he was entitled to wear more embroidery than the other chamberlains. This distinction, and sundry habits of Monsieur de R., continually served to make M. d'Aubusson angry. Once, when this difference in the first chamberlain's uniform was being discussed, he made a joke which was as ill-timed as it was inapplicable. "The first chamberlain's coat," said he, "ought to be well padded about the shoulders."

M. d'Aubusson got to the Court much in the style of a whipped puppy. Scores of times I have seen him on the point of resigning, so tired was he of it all. Madame de la Rochefoucault always kept persuading him to stay. She was anxious to have her own set about her at Court. She was a clever woman, with a refined, intellectual face. There was a touch of irony about her talk, the mocking accent

of good society; raillery that offended no one, but was tempered by real delicacy of feeling. I often saw her affected by the account of some noble action. Fully recognising her amiability and kind-heartedness, I am sorry to have to admit that she behaved badly to Josephine at the time of the divorce. It was obviously her place to stay with her mistress; she ought never to have left her, but she was duped by the Emperor and by his ambition.

Napoleon was anxious for her to resign. Had she not done so she would have remained by right lady-in-waiting to the Empress Marie Louise. As if in her own interest, it was hinted to her that, as she did not wish to follow Josephine and share her fortunes, she could not remain, voluntarily at least, with the new Empress. But, by resigning, the matter could be amicably arranged; and Napoleon would certainly reappoint her as lady-in-waiting to Marie Louise. Thus to Josephine and to the public she could offer the excuse of her inability to oppose the Emperor's wishes.

Into this trap she fell. She told Josephine that her health, her children and her family prevented her following her, if the Empress left Paris and France, as at first supposed. She would not take service with Marie Louise; she would resign. This she accordingly did. It was just what the Emperor wanted. Everyone knows that, being thus free to

act, he chose the Duchess de Montebello. In this case ambition proved a false counsellor to Madame de la Rochefoucault. She would have fared better had she listened to the dictates of her heart.

I will now go back to our life at Aix-la-Chapelle. Our circle comprised the members of the suite and a very few outsiders. General Franceschi and his wife were among these. She could never console herself for not having married Joseph Bonaparte when she had the chance. "But then," she would say, naively, "who could have foreseen what has happened?" This lost opportunity of hers, as I take it, had not a little to do with her violent quarrels with her husband, when, in default of other argument, they often had recourse to the tongs.

Another German lady, whose husband, a Frenchman, was in command at Cologne, came to stay at Aix during the whole term of our visit. Knowing that the Court was coming on to Cologne she wished to prevent her friends from committing any awkward solecisms, and gave them hints as to their proper deportment when being presented. She informed them that they had to make three curtseys: one at the door of the drawing-room, another in the centre of it, and another, *en pirouette*, as they took their departure. Such news turned all heads at Cologne; at any rate the heads of those who aspired to the honour of being presented. Most of

them were elderly dames, whose portly figures made such pirouetting very difficult, if not actually dangerous. Madame Duchaylar, whom I knew, and whose husband had an appointment at Cologne, came in hot haste to see me directly I arrived, to ask me to explain the meaning of the third curtsey, which for a fortnight had sorely puzzled all the good ladies. Amid much laughter, and by dint of reflection, I explained that curtsey number three was intended to include the Court circle; hence the sideward glance and so-called pirouette.

In this same Court circle there were some whose characteristics it would have been amusing to portray. One of my acquaintances lately asked me to do so, but it would be a most difficult task.

At Court no faces are visible, only masks. True, the mask sometimes slips, and you see the tip of an ear, yet if one describes that ear-tip one is called spiteful. To depict masks is not worth the trouble; you can meet with those everywhere. It seems to me that, if I were a Sovereign, I should find it vastly tedious to be surrounded by persons who thought and did exactly as I wished. One might as well have for company one's own image reflected in a hundred mirrors.

On the other hand, I should find it stimulating to converse with people who, in thought and action, were thoroughly independent, who had their own

ideas, and were not afraid to express them. But at the Court thoughts are like clothes—they have to be disguised by certain formal expressions; and, occasionally, it is ~~as~~ impossible to show one's real opinion as it would be to appear in a costume of two centuries back.

If grace be the complement of beauty, as taste is the complement of mind, then Frenchwomen should be grateful to Nature for treating them so well, for, all prejudice apart, I am bound to say that the women of my country are distinguished from those of any other. Our experiences at the different German Courts served to emphasise the truth of this remark. Not one of the princesses we met had such grace of bearing as the least elegant of our milliners' apprentices. I am convinced that the Princess de —, whom now we have the honour of reckoning among our compatriots, excellent dresser as she is, would roar with laughter could she again behold the gown that she wore when presented to the Emperor.

At Mayence we met the Princess M., whom we had previously seen for a moment at Aix-la-Chapelle. Passionately devoted to M. de Caulaincourt, she followed him about everywhere; the remarkable part of this sentimental journey was that she always dragged her husband about with her as well. So entirely did she ignore the proprieties that, at the



play, she spent a whole evening with her back to the stage, staring at M. de Caulaincourt.

When speaking of the play, I am reminded of a display of anger on the part of Napoleon, such as I had never seen.

It was upon Monsieur de R.'s head that the storm broke. The head chamberlain had charge of the Théâtre Français, and it was he who chose the actors who were to come to Mayence during the visits of the German princes to that place, in connection with the confederation of the Rhine. In view of making the Court pleasant to them a good theatrical company had been engaged.

A performance of *Cinna* had been given, with Mademoiselle Raucourt as Emilia. It was really preposterous to hear her say:

“*Cinna* I’ve charmed, yet I’ll charm many more!”

The Emperor was furious that such a specimen of our actresses should have been offered to the assembled princes. He said, rightly enough, that they would think that on an occasion of this sort the best artistes had been chosen; and they would go back with a very unfavourable impression of our leading theatre. He sharply rated Monsieur de R., and told him that henceforth Mademoiselle Raucourt should not play any leading parts, but only minor ones.

It was at Mayence, whither M. Méchin had

followed the Emperor, that he obtained a new appointment as prefect, in place of his former office. After leaving Aix, wherever the Court stopped, at Cologne or at Coblenz, there he was, too, and if ever you went through the ante-chamber you were sure to meet M. Méchin.

The Empress helped greatly to soothe Napoleon's anger; and it was owing to her urgent entreaties that M. Méchin was reinstated. It was sad, though, that he lost the Prefecture of La Roër, the first in all France for produce, which exceeded twenty-five thousand francs, while that of Laon was not worth twelve.

Josephine saw a good deal of M. Méchin's family while at Aix; he vacated the prefecture, and placed this at her disposal, he staying meanwhile with his family at an inn. In consequence of her intercession he was made Prefect of Laon.

Driving out one day, at Mayence, I happened to witness the arrival of the Prince Primate, afterwards Grand Duke of Frankfort. This excellent prince, as good as he was clever, succeeded his uncle the Elector of Mayence, but though the Revolution in France deprived him of his rights, since Mayence had been seized, he did not omit to pension off all his uncle's former servants.

I must mention a charming attention of his to myself. At the ball given by the town of Mayence

to the Emperor, he sat down on the chair left vacant by me when going to waltz with the Prince of Isenberg. I left my fan lying on the chair; in sitting down, he broke it. When the dance was over, I looked for my fan, but someone told me what had happened, so I gave it no further thought. Two months afterwards, in Paris, I received a most charming fan.

Whenever there was a diplomatic reception, Josephine used to look beforehand at the list of presentations, so that she knew what ambassadors and ministers were coming, and what she had to say to each of them. One day, however, when replying to M. de Lima, and saying, "I receive with pleasure the congratulations of the Prince Regent of Portugal," she made a slip, and said, "of the Reigning Prince of Portugal." After the audience she showed great concern. I do not know who the foolish person was who told her of this blunder. To speak of it to her was both ill-bred and unkind, for she was certain to take it to heart.

Yet, in other respects, I must say that all the audiences at which I was present passed off in the most decorous way, and, strange to say, in Marie Louise's time this was not the case, though she must have been accustomed to the formalities of the Austrian Court. Few things, however, were more pitiable than the receptions of this young and ill-

starred princess. The Duch<sup>ess</sup> de Montebello held a paper containing the list<sup>t</sup> of presentations; she often misread the foreign names, and having begun, "I have the honour of presenting to your Royal and Imperial Majesty, Monsieur —," she would stop short, stammering and hesitating. Then Marie Louise would lean over her to try and make out the name herself. Following Napoleon's example, she would ask the person presented the inevitable questions, "Are you married? Have you any children?" Sometimes, too, like her husband, she would add, "And what do you do?" Count von Einselden, the Saxon minister, whom at that time I often saw, used to say to me, after every audience held by Marie Louise, "Really, the Empress ought to know by now that I am not married and have no children, for I have told her so as many times as I have seen her. Apparently her memory is a bad one."

## CHAPTER XVI

*From Mayence to Saverne—Madame de la Rochefoucault complains—Josephine's good-nature—Madame Avrillon—Her jealousy of Madame Saint-Hilaire—Their quarrel—Josephine in tears—She alludes to the death of the Duke d'Enghien—The Court at Nancy—Visit from the Bishop—Madame Levi invites the Empress to lunch—The Empress declines—Josephine buys pearls of her—Her way with tradesmen—Napoleon's cold reception in Paris—His contempt for the people—The writer's domestic troubles—Sale of property—Flight of Messieurs . . . —The writer is ruined—Letter from Messieurs . . . —A sudden resolve—The writer begs the Empress to accept her resignation—General Foulcrand intervenes—Josephine sends for me—My explanation deferred.*

ON leaving Mayence, we stayed the night at Saverne, where we met General Ordener, who had commanded the Ettenheim expedition. With several of his brother officers he was invited to take supper with the Empress, and he happened to sit next to Madame de la Rochefoucault. Only knowing the General by name (which was of baneful celebrity), and not in the least by sight, I could not understand the signs that Madame de la Rochefoucault kept making to me across the table, signs which showed

her extreme annoyance. After supper, in Josephine's room, the matter was explained, when Madame de la Rochefoucault expressed herself thus :

“When I so long refused the honour which Your Majesty sought to confer upon me, I was well aware that Your Majesty's kindness and friendship could not save me from countless disagreeables over which you had no control, as, for instance, that of this evening, when I found myself placed next to that General Ordener.” Madame de la Rochefoucault could not forget this grievance. It may possibly be thought strange that she should have complained in this free fashion to the Empress, yet she had been her friend long before she was her lady-in-waiting, and Josephine's good-nature encouraged her to be perfectly frank. On another occasion I saw her actually make the Empress weep when lecturing her about her maids. I have already said how thoroughly good-natured the Empress was, being of a sweet, gentle disposition, but very weak. The last person who argued with her was always in the right. Thus it happened that the two conflicting parties would simultaneously appeal to her, each feeling certain of victory. The following is a case in point :

Mademoiselle Avrillon, who had been with the Empress when she was only Madame Bonaparte, had the greatest difficulty in checking the familiarity to which Josephine's great good-nature had accustomed

her. She also used<sup>d</sup> to complain, generally, about Madame Saint-Hilaire<sup>t</sup>, who, on a journey, had a better room given to her by Philippe de Ségur, the *major-domo*, than she had. Mademoiselle Avrillon would come and tease Josephine about this, while Madame Saint-Hilaire declared that she was the aggrieved party. Not the prerogatives <sup>of</sup> rival ambassadors could have occasioned disputes more heated than those which took place between Josephine's ladies-in-waiting. Mademoiselle Avrillon thought it most wrong that Madame Saint-Hilaire had her maid with her, and, above all, that she let her dine at the same table as herself. One day both parties came to Josephine for redress. As usual, she said that they were both in the right, which only served to make matters worse. Madame de la Rochefoucault now stepped in, telling the Empress that she ought never to allow her ladies-in-waiting to annoy her with their wranglings, and that it was her very good-nature which had brought things to such a pass. Josephine was so much hurt by this reproof that she began to cry.

One morning, before leaving Saverne, the events of the previous day naturally led the Empress to speak to me of the death of the Duke d'Enghien. She told me that she had heard the news from Bonaparte, who had come into her room at an early hour and mentioned the Duke's arrival, though

he did not as yet speak of his death. She leaped out of bed and flung herself at Napoleon's feet, beseeching him to spare his life. But Napoleon, raising her up, said sadly, "It is too late." If only she had known of it in time, Josephine believed that she might have induced the Emperor to alter his mind. She thought that by coming to inform her himself, that morning, of the catastrophe, Napoleon showed that he already regretted his rash act.

From Saverne the Court moved on to Nancy. The only two visits that Josephine received on the evening of her arrival presented a most strange contrast. One was from the Bishop, Monsieur d'Osmont; the other, from Madame Levi. The Empress was good natured enough to make an exception from the rule, and say that she would receive them. The Bishop was no new acquaintance for Her Majesty; he had often visited her in Paris. She appreciated his wit and polished, agreeable manners. Charming manners always influenced her greatly; they were an infallible passport to her favour.

As for Madame Levi, I do not know how she had managed to get into Josephine's good graces, but this rich Jewess came running in, in the most free-and-easy fashion, to invite the Empress to luncheon the next day. Josephine said that it was impossible,



but Madame insisted, and clamoured to know *why* she could not accept. She reminded her of another luncheon to which Madame Bonaparte came years ago when on her way to Plombières. Pressed to reply, the Empress at last said, "My dear Madame Levi, things are quite different now, I can no longer accept your invitations; still, come back to me to-morrow morning, and see me."

Madame Levi returned next day, bringing with her some very handsome pearls. Josephine bought these of her, to make amends for refusing to go to lunch.

The Empress occasionally forgot that it is easier to buy things than to pay for them, and such forgetfulness often proved most embarrassing. Folk blamed her for this, but herein they were wrong. Such prodigality was part of her good nature, that could refuse nobody anything. Her expenditure in this way often exceeded the sum allowed her for dress.

It behoved her attendants, who knew her disposition, to prevent the crowd of merchants from reaching her, all of them eager to get her to buy something. One day a jeweller pestered her to purchase a charming purse ornamented with brilliants. Josephine thought it very pretty and bought it, but the keeper of her privy purse would never loosen its strings to pay for it. After countless visits, and

having waited for two years, the poor jeweller was only too glad to get the purse returned to him. This refusal to pay in reply to just claims produced a very bad effect. It was the fault of those about her; she herself was not to blame.

On reaching Paris, I no longer wondered why Napoleon was so fond of travelling. In the provinces his path was bestrewn with flowers; there were triumphal arches and perpetual cries of "Long live the Emperor!" But on entering Paris, all about him was cold and silent. His carriage passed by almost unnoticed; so, of course, he cordially detested the Parisians.

During our stay at Mayence I once heard him speaking of the 10th of August, when he said, "At that time I was only an artillery officer. I was on the terrace at the water's edge, and I gnawed my fists (*sic*) to see a Sovereign awaiting the attack of the mob, that he ought to have swept away with volleys of cannon."

He spoke for some time and with much excitement about this, expressing profound contempt for the people that, as he said, was like water which took the shape of the vase containing it. Its will, he added, had to be bound in fetters; it needed someone to think for it and to act for it.

My return to Paris was followed by much domestic trouble. Before alluding to this I ought

to mention certain things which had occurred previously.

After my father's death, I was brought into relation with Monsieur G., his man of business, and at his house I met a certain Monsieur M., who was considered a most fortunate speculator. Monsieur G. took it as a great favour that his friend consented to take charge of a small sum with which I entrusted him to aid him in his financial operations. Of their exact nature I was ignorant, yet I subsequently had reason to believe that they were merely speculations upon the rise or fall of public securities. My dealings with him caused me, one day, to meet a Monsieur Odra, who it was said did a good deal of this kind of business for M. de Talleyrand.

I have since thought that Monsieur M.'s successful operations, by which for so many years I profited, were due to his intimacy with this Monsieur Odra, who must always have had complete and accurate information of the sort to ensure success.

For a long while Monsieur M. used to return me my capital with the profits thereon; and if some unusually good chance occurred he would take this back again. Had I been prudent I should have been content to increase my capital in this way, without compromising other funds. But here I must admit that I was to blame. Delighted at my success, I added all that I possibly could to the capital in

hand, and, moreover, was imprudent enough to speak of my luck to friends and relatives, who desired to have a share in it as well.

I mentioned this to Monsieur M. He said that he only transacted business of this sort for himself; and that at the instance of Monsieur G., his intimate friend, he had consented to do so on my account. For anyone else but myself, however, he declined to accept the slightest responsibility. I was imprudent enough to give my personal security for the funds which friends entrusted to me, and which, in turn, I duly handed to Monsieur M. for investment.

The alterations made in my home, during my absence in England, had been so badly executed that they had all to be done away with. The new work was in the hands of an architect who had special skill in the planning out and embellishment of gardens, but instead of making such changes *seriatim* and in detail, he devastated twenty-two acres of ground, destroyed the old avenue and made a new one leading from the middle of the park to the house. As he had not exactly calculated the duration of this work, the rainy season came on before it was finished. The new road, which had not yet been paved, was unfit for use, and to reach the house carriages were obliged to drive across the park grounds, while the labour of some hundred workmen, working for three months, was lost. Not only were such work and

the money spent upon it regrettable. The horses and carriages passing thus constantly across the grounds had cut them up terribly; and when spring came it took a long time to repair the turf and replace the trees. One may form some idea of the enormous expenditure when I state that the grass seed required cost two thousand francs, an item which, in work of this kind, usually figures as one of the most trifling.

I was of course distressed to see myself involuntarily involved in endless expenses such as these. But as all the property had been thus devastated, it had either to be set straight again or sold for a bargain, since, in its actual dilapidated condition, no one would have cared to purchase it. To sell it seemed impossible; I could not bring myself to make so cruel a sacrifice. In a portion of the grounds my dear father lay buried. I felt bound to keep the estate as long as life lasted.

Hitherto the profits I derived from Monsieur M.'s financial speculations met most of these disastrous expenses, but at last the latter absorbed them all, the capital itself becoming greatly diminished.

It was my luck that ruined me. Never calculating that my past successes could come to an end, I was so imprudent—so mad as to mortgage the splendid estate of V——, of which alone the glebe land was rented at twenty thousand francs. The term of the

mortgage was one year. I let my property go for nothing, thinking that I should be sure to recover possession of it by repayment of the loan advanced. I thought that my profits from Monsieur M.'s speculations would be enough to pay for the alterations of my home and to discharge debts which my husband had incurred, by backing bills, before he emigrated. By the end of the year it seemed to me that I should get back my property and be free from all debt.

A beautiful dream, forsooth, with a bitter awakening. My intentions were good enough, yet that was but poor comfort! Monsieur M., whose operations for the last six months had been far less successful, sometimes indeed resulting in a loss, no longer brought me back my capital and took it away again if a favourable opportunity presented itself. It remained perpetually in his hands, and I only drew upon this for my own personal expenses and to defray the cost of altering my house and estate.

The day after my arrival in Paris, I sent round to Monsieur M.'s house. I was told that he no longer lived there; they did not know where he was. Uneasy and alarmed, I hastened thither myself, only to receive a similar answer. He had given over his apartment and furniture to a German who could in no way enlighten me as to his whereabouts. Words fail to describe my feelings in that moment. If I

had been a widow, if all the money carried off or lost by Monsieur M. had belonged to me, such is my natural disposition that I should not have been in the least affected, but, in their kindness, my father-in-law and my mother-in-law had placed all that remained of their fortune at my disposal. I always considered myself the trustee of that fortune, and, on his return to France, my husband let me have the sole administration of it, never asking any questions. He knew nothing about Monsieur M.'s financial speculations; the skill or the luck by which I had managed to save a handsome fortune for him, in spite of the strict laws against emigrants, gave him the fullest confidence in my capacity. His kind, generous nature indeed overrated this, and he was for ever singing my praises to his relatives and friends.

If to such unbounded confidence on his part one adds his utter distaste for anything to do with business, it may easily be imagined how totally ignorant he was of his own affairs. Judge, then, of my feelings at seeing this brilliant fortune lost through my fatal imprudence, and at thinking that this excellent man, who had been brought up in all the luxury befitting his wealthy family, would have to share my self-imposed privations.

Personally I had decided what to do, yet what anguish was mine at seeing myself forced to part

with the house of hallowed memory to me as my beloved parent's last resting-place!

Alas! the enormous sums wasted over it would almost have sufficed<sup>3</sup> to repair the losses sustained by Monsieur M.'s flight. At any rate they would have formed quite a handsome fortune. But they were irretrievably lost, for in selling a country-house one only gets its original value; all the money spent in repairs or in alterations is so much money lost. On returning from Monsieur M.'s house I found a letter from him, bearing the post-mark of the Hague, in which he stated that he was in despair far more on my account than on his; that I ought to remember that it was almost against his will that he undertook to take charge of my capital, as he had never been in the habit of risking anybody's money but his own. That he had taken not a penny of it away with him—nothing but the value of his furniture, which fetched but a small sum. He was about to collect certain monies due to him in Holland; if he succeeded in getting them they would be sent on to me, as in the whole affair I was the only person compromised. That all money that he could recover in this way, or earn by his own industry, should be handed over to me.<sup>1</sup>

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1 For fourteen years I never heard a word about him, nor any news from himself. At length, after long search, I discovered, in 1818, that he was in England. I went thither,



This letter left me without the slightest hope. Bravely I had now to renounce society, in which I could no longer take my wonted brilliant place.

I wrote to the Empress. Without giving any details, I told her that unforeseen circumstances made it imperative for me to leave Paris, and I begged her to accept my resignation.

A few hours after the despatch of my letter, General Fouler, one of the equeries, came to me requesting me to visit Saint-Cloud at once. I went thither and found Josephine alone; she approached me with an air of kindly concern. "What has happened?" she asked; "whatever it is, I think I can make it right; to do so is the most pleasant prerogative of my position. Speak; tell me all frankly; open your heart to me. You know that I love you; during the months we have been together I learnt to appreciate you,<sup>1</sup> and I don't wish us to be separated. No," she added, embracing me, "we will not be separated; we cannot be."

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and had great trouble in finding him. He was vegetating there on the proceeds of a petty traffic in contraband goods. I managed to recover the small sum of 10,000 francs in notes, but these were subsequently not paid. I was obliged to return to London. At last, after several journeys, much trouble and fatigue—in order not to lose everything—I had perforce to accept goods of the value of 6,000 francs, or thereabouts. I heard since that he died almost insolvent.

1 Such kind words only prove Josephine's goodness, not my merit.

I was about to reply that I was deeply touched by her kindness, but that it was impossible for me to profit by it; that my present disasters were irreparable, and forced me to act as I proposed to act. Suddenly, as I was speaking, the Emperor came in; the room soon became filled, so I was obliged to postpone my explanation to another day.

## CHAPTER XVII

*Tragic affair narrated by Madame de la Rochefoucault—The Maréchale's comments thereon—The thief of hearts—From grave to gay—The lost diamond—How it was found—Talleyrand and Mademoiselle Charlotte—The diplomats are horrified—M. d'Azara questions Madame Duroc—Her smart reply—She thinks it silly herself—She is diplomatic in spite of herself—The Emperor proposes a promenade—Mysterious correspondence—Anonymous letters—The writers are never discovered—We go to La Malmaison—Names cancelled by the Emperor—His good memory—Court theatricals and receptions—The rich banker snubbed—The Princess Dolgorouky's dictum.*

THE most recent addition to the Empress's Court circle was Madame la Maréchale —. Still quite overcome by a story that her doctor had just told her, Madame de la Rochefoucault one day narrated how he was called to attend upon a young woman who had been run over by a carriage and so seriously injured that she died soon after his arrival. But before dying she just managed to say, "Someone will come directly, sir, who at my death will be greatly distressed. I recommend him to your care; do not leave him to his despair. Remove the pistols

from my writing-desk, for, in his first access of grief, I fear lest he may use these with terrible effect."

As it happened, the doctor soon afterwards did see a young man rush in, half beside himself with grief; such passionate despair roused the physician's interest.

~~As~~ Madame de la Rochefoucault was narrating all this, in moving accents, she was interrupted by Madame la Maréchale —, who gravely asked her, "Was the young man her husband?"

"I do not think so," replied the Countess, "but he was most unhappy, and consequently deserves sympathy."

"How now, madam," burst out the Maréchale, "is it possible that you can sympathise with one of these thieves of hearts, for it is plain that that is what he was—a thief of hearts!"

This expression "thief of hearts" and the Maréchale's severity of manner proved so vastly droll that the tears that rose to our eyes at the Countess's mournful tale were speedily checked.

Josephine had told some of us how the Maréchale had been robbed of a diamond. The story seemed almost incredible, and the Maréchale, leaning over me, whispered, "Now I'll tell you all about my losing the diamond." She thereupon entered into details. She said that she strongly suspected one of her men-servants of having stolen a very handsome

diamond. Accordingly she went to his room, armed with a pistol, and, having locked the door, she told him that she would not leave the room until she had found her diamond. The fellow protested his innocence, and, to prove it, stripped himself stark naked in her presence. When he was in this state she managed to discover the diamond concealed upon his person. The extraordinary details of her search I am bound to suppress.

Whenever the Maréchale visited the Empress, the young women used all eagerly to crowd round her. They hoped to get hold of one of her quaint speeches, which in society have become proverbial. I think more was attributed to her than she really ever said, though the vulgar adage tells us that one only lends money to those who are rich.

At the time that all public buildings bore the motto, "A Life of Liberty or Death: Unity and an Indivisible Republic," the Maréchale thought this so charming that she had it embroidered upon a piece of ribbon with which she trimmed her gown.

All the jokes made about her, however, had only one object, viz., to turn her into ridicule. How many women would count themselves lucky if the blame attached to them had no more serious motive than this!

That same day Madame Duroc came home much saddened by a visit which she had paid to the

Princess de Talleyrand. She thought an answer she had given M. d'Azara would make him think that she was a fool. Before stating the reason for her fears, I ought to mention the extreme affection of M. de Talleyrand for a pretty little girl that one day tumbled out of the clouds into his lap. Her name was Charlotte. Not only did the Princess pet the child, but Talleyrand himself was crazy about her. He talked of her incessantly; the most serious business, the presence of Ambassadors, nothing served to distract him from his idol.

When he came to Aix-la-Chapelle, she was ill. So anxiously did he await the arrival of couriers that general curiosity was aroused; many and various were the conjectures. Yet at last it transpired that the Prince's extreme affection was merely a proof of the child's charming nature; it was not due to any bond of relationship. Such affection, nevertheless, caused much surprise. Often, in the middle of important business, if this child approached him to kiss him, Talleyrand would interrupt the most serious conversation and press her to his bosom, to the utter amazement of all the diplomatists present.

That very day, M. d'Azara, who had been interrupted in this way, approaching Madame Duroc, whispered to her, "Madam, can you tell me who or what Charlotte is?"

The Duchess at that moment was not thinking

the least about the child. She looked at M. d'Azara in astonishment and said, "It is a sweet dish, sir, made with apples." On getting this point-blank reply, M. d'Azara felt convinced that the young Duchess was a far subtler diplomatist than himself, and that she wished to avoid answering his question and leave the problem unsolved. He bowed, and ~~said~~ not another word.

On leaving Talleyrand's, Madame Duroc thought again about M. d'Azara's strange question, unable to imagine why he had talked to her about cookery. Suddenly she recollected the child, and perceived that M. d'Azara had referred to Talleyrand's pet. Then she became greatly distressed at having given such an odd reply.

"What will M. d'Azara think? He'll imagine that I have gone crazy!" she sadly said to us. On the contrary, this answer, which she thought so ridiculous, was really the *ne plus ultra* of adroit diplomacy, giving a reply, yet saying nothing.

Since proffering my resignation I had not seen the Emperor; this recollection, as well as that of the terrible glance he gave me on the eve of our departure from Mayence, disconcerted me somewhat when he came into the Empress's room. But several persons accompanied him, and they were soon joined by others. I quickly regained my composure. He had come to propose that we should go out for a walk. Josephine

consented, and was so kind as to invite me to accompany her.

During our walk I had hoped to have an opportunity of explaining the reason for my decision, which nothing, alas! could change, but we were never alone.

Josephine told us of an extraordinary and hitherto inexplicable circumstance, albeit the Paris police and those on duty at the château had both endeavoured to solve the mystery.

Whenever the Emperor did anything—no matter what—which he wished to hide from Josephine, a few hours later she received a letter giving her full details of what had taken place. In the same way, all Josephine's actions upon which a certain interpretation could be put were communicated to the Emperor through a similar channel. These missives all came by the government post, and they were in the same handwriting. While the Court was at Saint-Cloud, they arrived so promptly that sometimes it was a wonder how they ever went so rapidly through the Paris post.

Once when Prince Eugene was leaving for the front, he told Josephine that in his regiment there was a young officer, to whom he was much attached, who had just lost his mother. She had left him some splendid diamonds, and their possession embarrassed him not a little, for he could not take them with him. Eugene offered to induce the Em-



press to keep the jewels with her own. Josephine consented to do so, saying that the officer might bring the diamonds and leave them with her senior lady-in-waiting; but when he came she requested that she might see him so as to know the value of what was being entrusted to her care.

Next day, after luncheon, she was told ~~that the~~ officer had arrived, so she went up for a moment into her lady-in-waiting's apartments to make sure of the worth of the jewels in question. Prince Eugene's friendship for the officer led her to take this trouble; and as soon as the diamonds had been inspected, she came back to her own rooms.

Two hours afterwards the Emperor received detailed information of the matter from the said anonymous correspondent, who omitted to state the reason for the officer's visit, thereby intending to give a palpable significance to the facts. The time and the description of the officer were quite exact. For many years such mysterious letters followed upon any event upon which some evil construction could possibly be put. The author, without doubt, was an inmate of the château; indeed, he must have been a member of the Court circle, having entrance to all the *salons*, for frequently these letters spoke of things that no servant nor subordinate could possibly have known. The handwriting of these epistles was always the same, and did not appear to be disguised.

No light was ever thrown upon the mysterious

informant, who followed Their Majesties about from place to place.

Two days afterwards Josephine invited me to accompany her to La Malmaison. The Emperor went with us, and on our arrival we sat down for a few moments in the drawing-room. M. de Rémusat profited by this occasion to approach the Emperor. He had a sheet of paper in one hand and a pen in the other. The Emperor ran his eye over the list, and, taking the pen, angrily struck out two of the names on it.

It was a list of invitations to a reception. Josephine, sitting next to me, smiled; then she took my arm preparatory to a stroll in the park. I was curious to know what the cancelled names were which had provoked that smile, but I did not venture to enquire. The Empress soon satisfied me upon that point. She told me that Napoleon always wished to see the invitation list, often striking out some of the names. Two of the names were, however, certain to be cancelled. If the Emperor ever let them stand, it was on account of the two ladies' associates and relatives; otherwise they would always have been excluded. The name of the one was Madame de V., and of the other Madame de T. The Emperor's memory for names and persons rarely played him false.

When theatricals were given at Court, a reception usually followed the performance. Many people

in the town received cards for the play, but such invitations in no way entitled them to appear at the reception afterwards.

One evening Monsieur de M., a wealthy banker, was in the stalls, faultlessly, indeed brilliantly, attired in full evening costume. His dress in no way differed from that of the courtiers by whom he was surrounded. On coming out, he met several members of the diplomatic body whom he knew, and, while talking to them, he walked along into the drawing-rooms beyond.

He had only been there a few moments when the Emperor, in all the crowd, singled out his face as one which he did not know, and promptly sent a message for him to withdraw. The honoured position held by Monsieur de M. in society made the messenger's task a far from pleasant one. Monsieur de M. felt this all the more keenly because he habitually liked to mix with persons about the Court, and himself often entertained ambassadors and members of the very best society.

Such gatherings were one evening defined in my presence by the Princess Dolgorouky, that clever woman whose wit gave charm to the Empress Catherine's Court. On leaving the château she came to the Baroness de St. Marceau, where I was. On being asked what she thought of the reception, she replied, "Well, it is a great power, certainly, but it is not a Court."

## CHAPTER XVIII

*My talk with the Empress about Prince de —'*

*Order given by the Emperor to separate him from his mistress—The complications which arise—The Emperor is displeased—My further talk with the Empress—The Emperor's sisters—The Princess Pauline—Her toilette and airy costume—Her astounding stinginess—Niggardly ways of all the Bonapartes—Meanness of Napoleon's mother—Her lady companion at a thousand francs per annum—She economises the sugar—She cuts out her own chemises—Cardinal Fesch's mean ways—Louis Bonaparte—His cold exterior and passionate temperament—His jealousy—Mademoiselle C., Hortense's friend—Cambacérès' gravity upset—Napoleon's speech about Joseph—I chat with the Empress—She envies the lot of a poor woman—Her dislike of etiquette—Her distress at certain calumnies—Napoleon's letter to Josephine about Hortense—The latter is shy of Napoleon—I persist in my resolve to leave the Court.*

IN speaking of Court receptions, I have turned away from my talk with the Empress, who was led to tell me about the marriage of a minister which surprised everybody, including himself.

Shocked at the general irreligion and immorality (the necessary consequence of anarchy), the Emperor thought to strengthen his authority by re-establishing

religion and by setting the example of a regular, orderly life. He first cast his eyes upon several persons at the Court. One of his ministers received orders to send away his mistress, who until now had done the honours at his own home.

It was thought perfectly natural that he should have a mistress, but he was requested to visit her at her own residence, so that her presence in his house might not give the representatives of all the European Sovereigns a proof of his contempt for conventionalities.

This minister, possessed of the highest mental endowments, had yet such a weak, lazy character that he preferred to be ruled by those about him rather than be troubled to assert himself. Thus he was delighted (so they suppose) that the Emperor's orders should put an end to his actual way of living, which, though it displeased him, he had not strength enough to alter.

As regards his mistress, it was a very different thing. Verbally and in writing she had proclaimed it to everyone, times out of number, that she was his wife, and that so little was wanting to make their marriage-ceremony complete that it was hardly worth speaking about. Except that they had not been to the municipality, everything necessary to make them man and wife had been done. Woman-like, she had no intention of giving up the game in that way.

The minister's weak, easy-going nature made her feel sure that he would not say no, if once she managed to overcome the Emperor. Accordingly she laid all her plans with a view to seeing His Majesty. This was not an easy thing to do, as he disliked her. Her illicit intimacy with the minister, which it had pleased her to advertise, prejudiced him against her.

Josephine, to whom she applied with a view of obtaining an audience, did not dare to solicit such a thing. But Madame — was not to be daunted. She stationed herself in the apartments and corridors of the Palace. After many hours of waiting she caught the Emperor in a doorway, and flung herself at his feet. So true is it that the most foolish of beasts has a sort of sentimental eloquence when its happiness is at stake that she managed to wring from the Emperor the following speech: "Well, madam, if you don't wish to leave him, you had better marry him."

This was all she wanted, yet hitherto she had been unable to conquer the minister's scruples. Now, however, she was armed with an Imperial order, and she went off triumphant, intending to force the minister to marry her. This matter will serve to convince us that a person of little or no intelligence will often succeed in accomplishing things wherein those who have tact and a sense of propriety would fail, for the latter are held back by countless fears, by

a dread of wounding manifold susceptibilities. The person bereft of such scruples sees only his goal and makes boldly for it, passing blindly over all obstacles which might check more sensitive natures.

The Emperor was vexed with the woman; vexed with himself, too, for having yielded to her importunities. It was the first time that an order had been obtained from him against his wish. The haste with which it was executed spared him the trouble of revoking it. But, in his heart of hearts, he cherished a deep aversion for the woman who first made him modify his inflexible will. The sight of her brought back disagreeable recollections, and he avoided her as much as possible. The less intellectually attractive she was, the more exasperated he became at having given in to her. They say that this person, once so handsome, proved vastly profitable to her first two husbands. The first husband, so the story goes, lost her the day after marrying her. She was carried off by the second, and, in accordance with British law, husband number two had to pay his rival a handsome sum for thus relieving him of his bride.

Her second husband had long been urgently solicited by her to consent to a divorce. She gave him a good deal of money as a bribe. Again, it is said that the minister, glad of a barrier to marriage with Madame —, paid the husband handsome sums not to get divorced. Delighted at this double source

of income, the husband was only too pleased to prolong the situation; but they say that, when it seemed likely that he would lose both pensions, and a decision had to be made, he asked a very high price for his consent.

When telling me all this, Josephine was led to speak of the Emperor's sisters, as we were alone. I could see that she had no great liking for them. She seemed astonished that the Emperor's attempted severity as regards Court morals did not extend to his own family. Princess Pauline formed the main topic of our talk. She was extremely beautiful, and she was always anxious that no one should have the least doubt as to the perfection of her physical charms. Her ladies-in-waiting were often admitted to her apartment when she was dressing, and she purposely lingered over her toilette in order to invite admiration. A long interval often ensued between the handing of a chemise to her and the putting on of this; meanwhile she would walk about the room as composedly as if she had been fully clothed. To me certain details of this toilette seem positively incredible; I can hardly bear to think of them.

Josephine told me about Pauline's child by her first husband, General Leclerc. This charming boy was sent to Italy, to his stepfather's relatives, who, it is said, disliked the child. Thinking that there would be issue from the second marriage, they did



not like the idea of having a son of General Leclerc as their brother. Be that as it may, the boy died.

Josephine said that he was a most amusing little fellow, and quoted one of his precocious remarks.

One day his mother, with much affectation, refused to take any coffee,<sup>1</sup> saying that it had cost her too dear. By this she meant that for colonial produce of this sort the Emperor had despatched the expedition to St. Domingo, where General Leclerc had lost his life. "But, mamma," cried her son, "you always take *sugar* every day!" The Empress spoke of the child with much sympathy, and was grieved at his early death.

In common with all the Bonaparte family, the Princess Pauline was mean and stingy to a point which in any ordinary person would have seemed ridiculous, but which was infinitely more so in the sister of an Emperor. Side by side with ostentatious expenditure there was economy of an absolutely inconceivable nature. An example will suffice. When at the Bagni di Lucca, on the mantelpiece of her drawing-room there were candelabra holding wax-lights. Directly visitors took their departure these were extinguished, and if another carriage was heard driving up, there was a rush to relight them. This performance went on for the whole evening.

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<sup>1</sup> Doctors had forbidden this, for health reasons.

But any ludicrous parsimony on the part of Napoleon's brothers and sisters was completely outdone by that of his mother.

At the time of the Consulate her house was as yet kept up on a very modest scale. She only had one lady companion, whom she paid a salary of a thousand francs per annum. This lady had been in a convent, and belonged to a very good family of the Franche Comté. When in Rome, where Madame Bonaparte was presented to the Pope, she told her lady companion that for a ceremony of this kind she must have a suitable costume, especially a large veil, such as at that time was worn. When Madame D. remarked that a veil of this description would cost five hundred francs, far more than she could afford, Madame Bonaparte said, "I will advance you half a year's salary." As this lady could not sacrifice six months' salary just for a veil, on her return to Paris she determined to resign her post. Since that time, when Madame Bonaparte (Madame Mère as they used to call her) had to keep up a larger establishment and a well-appointed table, she noticed that several ladies of her household asked for sugar with their melons, and accordingly told her cook not to send up any of this fruit, so as to avoid such extra consumption.

At this period she used to drive sometimes to the Gagne-Petit shops in the Rue des Moineaux,

and alight at some distance from these, for fear that, seeing her carriage, they would make her pay a few pence more. Here she used to buy linen for her chemises, and, on reaching home, would retire to her room and cut these out herself, being afraid that a workwoman might use a little more of the stuff!

Cardinal Fesch, her brother, who spent so many millions at his house in the Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin, also suffered from this family disease. When he was made Cardinal his sister lived at Rome and he stayed with her. When he was going to give a grand dinner to all the Cardinals Madame Bonaparte's cook told him that certain earthenware pans and dishes were wanted for kitchen use, in which to put sauces, gravy, &c. The Cardinal told him to buy these. When the *chef* sent in the bill of eighteen francs, besides the cost of the dinner, the Cardinal told him to pack up all this crockery and put it away in one of the cupboards of his ante-room, not wishing to leave it in his sister's kitchen, as he had paid for it.

Of all the members of the Emperor's family, Louis was the one who had least of this defect, and who possessed certain fine qualities—an honest fellow, of somewhat exaggerated sentiments. Had she loved him, he would have been passionately devoted to his wife; but her manner towards him

was always distant. She had sacrificed her affections to please her mother, and by what laws can these be ruled? Our conduct certainly depends upon our will, but our sentiments are involuntary. In the world I have often noticed conduct confused with affection, a most unjust proceeding, to my mind. To oneself, as to the husband one loves least, it is an imperative duty to behave circumspectly; loving is quite another matter. Herein will can certainly not suffice.

Beneath a somewhat cold exterior Louis concealed a passionate soul; he could not be satisfied with such liking as his wife could show for him. Her pure affection and tender attachment for her mother, and regard for her brother, roused his envy. He was jealous of everything that took her away from him; he would like to have prohibited her music and her drawing, which she cultivated with much success. Such innocent accomplishments often irritated him.

Queen Hortense had a friend in the person of one of her readers, Mademoiselle C. Louis detested her. His wife's affection for her was the sole motive for such antipathy.

Mademoiselle C. managed the Queen's entire household. She passed for being clever. What grounds existed for such a supposition I know not, but they said that far from allaying the irritation of

husband and wife she aggravated this by her advice. This is but a rumour, and I give it for what it is worth. Personally I do not believe it, as Hortense had sense enough to order her way of life as she chose. She was a woman charming by reason of her grace, her talent, her engaging manners and amiable disposition. She was not pretty. The conformation of her mouth, with long projecting teeth, spoilt her face, which, but for this defect, her lovely blue eyes would have made remarkable. She had a good complexion and pretty, fair hair. She was of medium height, with a very graceful figure. Soon after her promotion and that of her family, she had one day to listen to a speech of Cambacérès. Being but little used as yet to the epithet "august," which it was thought fit to apply to her mother, Hortense burst out laughing, almost imperilling the Lord Chancellor's gravity. However, he soon recovered his composure, and his air of serious importance on State occasions of this kind is well known.

Speaking once of his brother Joseph, the Emperor said that he possessed the faculty for gossip of some old crone.

Two days after this visit to La Malmaison, I received a message from Josephine, asking me to come and see her at Saint-Cloud. I was then living in a country-house not far off. On arriving, I found her in her bed-chamber, weeping and apparently much

distressed. She took my hand, and made me sit close beside her, holding my hand in hers. She continued to weep, and I sought to say a few consolatory words, which are always difficult to utter when one as yet knows not the cause for tears.

"Do you see that picture?" said she, pointing to one on the wall. "Well, the woman in that was happier than I am. Ah! I often envy her, and would like to be in her place. And yet they think my lot a happy one, and are envious of it! If they only knew. An Empress is only a bedizened slave; even my thoughts are not my own; they want to dictate these to me! They would like to crush out all my sympathies and paralyse all my feelings!"

Though she did not explain matters clearly, I could perceive that something had keenly vexed her. I believe it was about certain of her friends whom she had endeavoured to help, but without success. When thus annoyed, she resented all the more bitterly the trammels of Court etiquette.

"They expect me to remain seated," said she, "when women formerly my superiors enter the room. It is impossible; I cannot do so. What pleasure is it to me to make my companions feel the respective differences in our rank? No, the thing is impossible."

"To be loved," she went on, "that is my heart's main desire."

For a long while we sat together alone like this. She spoke of the horrible calumnies printed in the English papers about her daughter and re-echoed by the Paris public. In her emotion she was led to show me the letter which the Emperor, when at Boulogne, had sent her to Aix-la-Chapelle. In this he complained of never getting any news from Hortense, and said that her children were just as dear to him as if they were his own. He seemed hurt by such silence. Josephine had written to Hortense, begging her to be less neglectful towards Napoleon, and she showed me her answer. Hortense said that it was impossible that the Emperor could doubt her attachment to him. She would, indeed, be a very monster of ingratitude if she did not feel grateful and affectionate towards him for all that he had done for her brother and herself. Yet she could not help feeling somewhat shy of him, and it was this shyness which often checked the expression of her affection, and was the cause of her silence. These lying statements in the public press always distressed Josephine deeply.

I took leave of her without alluding to my resignation and without bidding her farewell, as I had intended to do. The kindnesses wherewith she had overwhelmed me, the many proofs of her attachment made it incumbent upon me not to choose a time when she was thus grieved and agitated for interesting

her in my affairs. But on leaving Saint-Cloud, I formally resolved never to return thither. I meant to say good-bye to Josephine in writing and leave Paris in a very few days.



## CHAPTER XIX

*Preparations for departure—Painful duties—Absurd conjectures—The Court glad at my going—Josephine's weakness—My despair—My servants accompany me—I go to my country retreat—My taste for agriculture—My lackeys turn ploughmen—Paris is forgotten—Perfect tranquillity—Josephine's kindness—She endeavours to get my husband an appointment—My enemies combine against me—M. Lacroix-Frainville—Much ado about nothing—I reply to the memoir—The danger of eloquence—Cardinal Duperron's opinion—Pernicious rhetoric of the bar and the bench—My father's remains moved to Montmartre—Fresh abuse of confidence—I return to my country home—Faithlessness and ingratitude of my domestics—I give up agriculture.*

I AT once began to make preparations for my departure. For one thing, however, strength failed me; it was the moving of my father's remains. Having decided to sell my house, I did not wish to leave these behind; but, precious as they were to me, I decided to have them placed in the precincts of some cemetery where some day I might take my place at his side. This task of removal was so painful to me that I postponed it until the uncertain date of the sale of the property.

The unvarying kindness of my husband, who never once reproached me, my secret satisfaction at performing an act of self-sacrifice, and my naturally scrupulous and determined character, served to brace up my courage for this departure. When putting aside all my jewels, which, together with my house, I intended should be sold in order to pay my debts, I felt more pleasure than ever I had experienced in wearing them, and the sight of them did not arouse a single pang of regret.

But such force and such courage soon vanished when I heard all the suppositions to which my resignation had given rise in society. I had made no secret of it; the rumour of it was soon afloat, and then it was that I paid dearly for all the countless kindnesses with which Josephine had overwhelmed me. If I had been a favourite, and if such preferences had given rise to jealousy, how gleefully did society now take its revenge! It seemed that in my absence they doubted the depth and sincerity of the Empress's affection for me, and sought to destroy this, knowing her weak nature, and that she did not always stand up for her absent friends.

Alas! it was just her attachment for me which gave rise to all these absurd rumours. If she had accepted my resignation on the day that I proffered it to her, the effect would have been a very different

one. But the time which had since elapsed, and the repeated invitations she gave me to come to Saint-Cloud, served to start a thousand stories, each one more ridiculous than the other. If the object of society was to wound me, most certainly it succeeded.

I could not bear to think that I had provoked such malevolence. Up till now I thought I had not a single enemy, and it was horrible to me to find that I had so many. My despair all but cost me my life. The tender care of relatives and friends, however, saved me from the death that I desired and to which I was close.

When health returned, I once more busied myself with preparations for my departure, but with more eagerness than prudence. Society, in which I had filled a brilliant place, now became abhorrent to me; I was anxious to escape from it, and my eagerness did not allow me to take proper precautions for safeguarding my belongings in Paris.

I entrusted everything to a man whose name I will not mention, out of respect for the worthy body to which he then belonged. I had great confidence in him; I left him a power-of-attorney to dispose not only of my estates, but also of my horses, carriages, numerous furniture, jewels, and, in short, of everything valuable, I only taking a few necessaries with me.

If I had had the courage to stay in Paris

and superintend the sale of my effects myself, I should have realised more than enough to pay off all my liabilities. But this I would not do; and my trust had been so misplaced, that I only got half the value of what I had left behind.

On leaving the capital, I went to an estate of mine situated about twelve leagues from Paris; I had only sacrificed my own personal valuables. I could not find the heart to dismiss the servants who, as I believed, were attached to me. } When I spoke of sending them away, they all seemed so unhappy that, with few exceptions, I took them all with me.

The lands on my estate in the country had not been farmed; I took it into my head to cultivate them. Imagination, which always has served to stimulate my activity, made me take eagerly to this occupation. All my big Paris lackeys, used to ante-room idleness, I straightway transformed into strapping ploughmen. From such a metamorphosis the successful outlook of such a scheme may be imagined. In reading works by the Abbé Rozier, and the "Maison Rustique," my evenings were taken up, my days being spent in an exercise most beneficial to my health.

These were days of stir, of movement, that soon caused me to forget Paris. Such recollections, indeed, made me believe that they belonged to another life altogether, so different was the present from the past.

This sudden transition—from extreme luxury to

the utmost simplicity, from a life spent in the tumult of the great world to one passed in perfect solitude—all this did not give me a single touch of regret. I was happy in the enjoyment of such calm. The handsome property which I had left behind in Paris, together with a quantity of furniture, dispelled any uneasiness as to the full discharge of all my debts. I was far from entertaining the least doubt as to the probity and zeal of the person who was acting on my behalf; I placed implicit confidence in him. I had still some of the light-hearted recklessness of youth; my recent troubles had not served to check this. Alas! time and the many grievous deceptions of this nature have never yet been able to do so. My will and my many resolves have been equally powerless to cure me of being over-confident.

The distaste which my husband showed for the country was the only thing which troubled my actual happiness. To him such solitude proved tedious. For his sake I made a huge sacrifice; for him I doffed my shroud. It had been my desire that all should deem me dead and utterly forget me. It cost me much to go back again to the world that I had left. Nevertheless, I went to Paris and wrote to Josephine, saying, that though I did not presume to have such rights as in the past I had for appealing to her bounty, I yet ventured to remind her of her promise to get an appointment for my husband in the household troops,

his experiences as a cavalry officer amply qualifying him for such a post. The next day the Empress's private secretary, M. Deschamps, called upon me with a letter from his mistress. I had been wrong, she said, in thinking that she had forgotten me. M. Deschamps added that directly the Empress got my letter she instantly asked for a list of vacant appointments in the household troops. On learning that there was not a single vacancy, she sent to enquire if a post in the Treasury would suit my husband.

Such an appointment was far from being irksome; the work was easy and light. I accordingly accepted on his behalf, and M. Deschamps assured me that his nomination would speedily follow. Indeed, three days afterwards it was officially communicated to Josephine.

My journey to Paris had more than one motive. I had received letters from all my friends, warning me of the vindictive attacks made upon me by Monsieur —, whose impertinent attentions I had once promptly checked. By way of revenge he had possessed himself of one of my bills, intending to sue me for default of payment. His lawyer, M. Lacroix-Frainville, had published a most voluminous statement, in which a false charge was bolstered up by grandiloquent phrases. Alarmed at this document, and at the effect it would produce, my friends urged me to come up to Paris, fearing that if no defence were offered I should lose my case.

I myself wrote a reply to M. Lacroix-Frainville. It was compressed into the space of four pages—a bare statement of the facts—which he had swamped in a flood of verbiage—a plain, unvarnished recital of the truth. It has ever been my opinion that this dangerous art of eloquence only serves to mislead the judgment; by directing the whole powers of the mind upon one side of a question, the rhetorical charm of an advocate at last succeeds in effacing all that it is important for him to hide. As a proof of the danger of eloquence, one may remember the story of Cardinal Duperron, who, preaching to Henri III., with a view to demonstrating the existence of God, said, “And now, if Your Majesty wishes, I can just as plainly prove the *non-existence* of a Deity.”

I won my case, in spite of all the efforts of my adversary; yet this advantage, together with the appointment secured for my husband, was but a poor requital for all the trials and vexations attendant upon my visit to Paris. Foremost of these was the removal of my dear father's remains to the cemetery at Montmartre, where I made preparations to be buried at his side. Where I shall die I cannot tell, but my last request to surviving friends is that I may be buried beside him. Anxious to spare them all trouble, I have only to ask them to inscribe my name upon the tombstone which already stands there. The knowledge of my agent's dishonesty was another

source of keen distress. I had thought that poverty would at least have freed me from debt; but I was now to discover that this was far from being the case. I had placed such complete trust in this agent, and had taken so few precautions, that legal proceedings would have been difficult and, in all probability, fruitless. By denouncing the respectable corporation to which the individual in question belonged I might have had my revenge. Indeed, I thought of doing this, ordered my carriage and was driving to the place where his colleagues were assembled, when I suddenly told the coachman to turn back. My weakness of character, always greatest when I was called upon to retaliate, here hindered me. I could not bring myself to ruin a person who, up till now, enjoyed general regard and esteem. My wish to return to the country was another deterrent, and I left Paris without having taken proceedings of any kind against the individual who had behaved thus shamefully towards me.

My home-coming had not been announced. This was done not from any spirit of mistrust, but simply because my movements were so uncertain that it was impossible for me to fix a date for my return.

They did not expect me, and on arrival I soon found that most of my servants had been robbing me in the most impudent manner. Sacks of corn and waggon-loads of hay had disappeared. I got to know



this all too late; it utterly discouraged me. Among these thievish domestics there was a gardener and his imbecile son. This man could get no situation in consequence of his son's infirmity, of which many people were frightened. For this reason I had kept him on; yet it was he who proved to be the chief delinquent.

I was finally forced to admit that a woman, single-handed, is powerless to manage an estate of this kind, but must inevitably be plundered by all her work-people. I determined to sell it, part of the purchase-money being still due, and I subsequently rented a small house in the Orléanais, on the banks of the Loire.

There I had leisure to regret my active farming days. If I could choose my favourite mode of life, I should like to live with friends at a farm-house and devote myself to agriculture. The world and all its pleasures never afforded me half the enjoyment that I got from this kind of life. It was painful to me to be obliged to give it up.

## CHAPTER XX

*Monotony of my life—I prefer such solitude—Boredom of provincial existence—I fast for three months, and am all the better for it—Monsieur de B., the septuagenarian—He weds a young bride—I revisit Paris—My sleeplessness—I take opium—Its baneful effect—I lose my reason—My stay in a private asylum—I gradually recover—The Restoration—Monsieur de V. tenders his resignation—Reflections on the fall of Napoleon—The generals of the Empire and the escort of Monsieur—Ceremony at Notre Dame—I propose to narrate the strange adventures of Madame D.*

LIVING at first in my little house, which had no interests to engage me, a day seemed to me to consist of more than twenty-four hours. But by mapping out my occupations in a regular way I managed to curtail its tedious length. Reading, walking, music and sewing soon filled up the hours; soon they passed all too swiftly. Such regularity let me understand how the sound of the bell in convents is the only thing which makes existence for the nuns supportable. It may seem surprising that I did not go and live with my mother or with my husband, and I may, perhaps, deserve blame for not doing so; yet

allowances may likewise be made for the weakness of human nature.

In the town where my mother lived I had occupied the foremost rank; the estate that I had sold was one of the finest in the whole province. It was painful to me to return to the scenes of former prosperity. As regards the town where my husband lived, my motives were not the same; but it was uncertain if he would stay there long—there was some talk of his changing his post for one in some other department. Besides, I preferred my solitude. So simple are my tastes, and so frugal my needs, that I can live upon a very modest sum without ever missing aught of the luxury to which, from my youth, I had been accustomed. When by myself, I have never known what it is to be bored. Whatever my position, I can always provide occupation for myself; but when living with tedious persons this is not so easy; I have then scarcely the patience to tolerate them. When by myself I never noticed my altered fortune nor felt the miss of it. Where my husband was living I should soon have known how poor I was. When obliged to fulfil the duties imposed by society, I should have been reminded that I no longer had a carriage; when accepting dinner invitations or issuing these myself, I should have discovered that I wanted a cook; and when dressing, after the tasteful costumes

I had always been in the habit of wearing, the clothes I possessed would have seemed to me far too simple in style. • What compensation should I have had for all this? I should have listened while a few old gossips babbled about politics. Perhaps, too, I might have heard all the news of the town. Pshaw! what do I care about the doings of others? I have • quite enough trouble to regulate my own. In the evening I should have had to endure the tedium of *reversi* or the boredom of *boston*, a boredom that I should never have felt if living alone.

In my prosperous days I tried an experiment upon myself, which I would here recommend to every wise person.

I wanted to know what sum I really needed to live upon, and for three months, while I kept a good table, I myself subsisted upon nothing but milk and bread; and in a small room adjoining my bed-chamber I slept quite comfortably upon a few trusses of straw. When such time of probation was over, I perceived that my health had remained excellent, and I felt genuine pleasure to think that, whatever my circumstances, whatever ills might be in store for me, I should never • be dependent, as I could always manage to earn sufficient to provide for my daily needs.

Nothing, as I think, would help more to the perfecting of character than the fasting-test to which I have just alluded. If all men were but thoroughly

convinced how little they really needed, they would in general be better and more upright.

But, imbued with the principle that bids us judge a man by his personal qualities, and not by the cloth he wears, society also ought to afford an equal welcome to wisdom in fustian as to folly in cloth of gold.

These thoughts on ambition remind me of the astonishment I felt one day when a man, aged seventy, Monsieur de B., suddenly announced his marriage to one of the most beautiful women who ever served to ornament Napoleon's Court. This charming person had next to no fortune whatever; her family thought the price paid for it in this way none too dear, so they sacrificed her to this dotard. I should like to know if all the diamonds with which they bedecked the victim could ever have indemnified her for such a sacrifice. And her seventy-year-old husband, what could have induced him to make such a fantastic marriage as this? When the time for passion is past, it is not likely that one would feel the need of it. No! It was not the pleasing qualities of this charming person which decided him; it was her remarkable beauty. He hoped that she would attract general regard, and that the interest she inspired might secure him *a place at Court*.

A place, forsooth! Miserable dotard! Don't you see the place that awaits you, towards which each day you are advancing, step by step? Men, however,

are all like that. I often, in imagination, seem to see a troop of maniacs dancing in a ring round the tomb that they do not see, and into which, one after another, they fall.

After a stay of some years in the Orléanais, some friends of mine, who had an estate near Blois, broke in upon my solitude and took me back with them to Paris. I have often regretted their good-nature since, and my own weakness in yielding.

I cannot say if it was the change of air, the want of exercise, or the din of Paris to which I was no longer used, but I could get no sleep at all. Exhausted by such insomnia, I consulted a physician, who advised me to take each evening a very small dose of opium. After awhile this remedy produced no effect, and by degrees I doubled the dose, until the dangerous drug affected my brain, and frequently produced serious mental disorder.

Being away from my home and my husband, such temporary fits of aberration did not sufficiently alarm my friends to make them instantly provide a remedy. It was not until some considerable time had elapsed, when the malady had reached its height, that they thought of a cure. My mother's man of business consulted a physician who kept a private asylum. By degrees the violent excitement brought on by taking opium subsided. When I could no longer get the drug, lucid intervals were longer and more

frequent. In a year's time I was completely cured, but this cure I owed to Nature, not to any human remedy.

A doctor whom I since consulted as to the chance of a relapse thoroughly reassured me upon this head. My illness was solely due to the abuse of opium; if I abstained from it, I should have no cause for alarm. Words fail me to describe all that I suffered in this year. When completely cured I no longer wished to live alone; my fears of a relapse were as yet not wholly dispelled. I desired to stay with friends who could take care of me.

I went to reside in a charming house on the Boulevard des Invalides, with M. and Madame B., whom I looked upon as my children, so fond was I of them. During my illness a great revolution had occurred, and I regained my health at the period of the Restoration. Tired of his post, which laziness and dislike of the country had alone made him covet, my husband now tendered his resignation, and came to join me in Paris. I was glad that the new order of things would now give my country some measure of freedom, and restore to the French nation a little of that dignity which it had lost beneath the Emperor's rod of iron. True, such liberty was bought at the cost of invasion by foreign armies, but far from putting the shame of it upon the nation, I lay it wholly and solely to Napoleon's charge.

It was his pride, his insatiable ambition that, terrifying other monarchs, caused them to take up arms against us. It was his despotism which, exhausting the French, robbed them of their energy and paralysed their sources of defence. Every man whose soul yet contained a spark of generous sentiment felt that our degrading fetters must be broken.

National opinion it was that overthrew Bonaparte. Never believe that the will of England, aided by Austrian and Russian bayonets, could ever have demolished this moral Colossus, if the French themselves had not undermined the pedestal upon which they had first placed it. In 1804, when Bonaparte was at the zenith of his power, my insight into his private life inspired me with but little liking for him. In 1814 I hated him for the misfortunes that he had brought upon France, and for the shame which but for him she would never have suffered—a shame that, as a Frenchwoman, I shared.

To have laws imposed upon us by foreigners, after ourselves dictating these to all Europe, only increased my hatred of him. Yet I was equally indignant to see at Notre Dame the generals whom I had met in Napoleon's reception-rooms all crowding round the footsteps of Monsieur. I had never received any benefits from the Emperor, so I was free to think as I liked. But all these children of glory, whom he had loaded with favours and riches! How



could they abandon him thus promptly? Only a few leagues lay between him and them, yet already they formed the triumphal train of him who had hurled their Bonaparte from the throne.

Such conduct—a contrast to all the glorious deeds done by these fawners in the past—deeply grieved me. I sought to fix all the odium of it upon Napoleon; but I could only account for it by thinking that a master from whom they had received so many favours, and whom yet they abandoned thus, must indeed be hateful, since the remembrance of his generous deeds could not efface that of his evil ones. In spite of this explanation I left Notre Dame before the ceremony ended; the sight of all those ungrateful turncoats pained me.

A parallel might have been instituted between the master who went out and the master who came in. He who went out was already forsaken; he who came in brought with him old servants who, for five-and-twenty years, had borne poverty and exile in order to share his lot. I must now leave politics, the discussion of which in no way befits my sex, in order to relate the story of a woman whom, living in the same house as myself, I happened to know, and whose life is full of strange incidents, so strange, indeed, that it all might be taken for a novel. I tell it here to show that some husbands are so imprudent that they themselves drive their wives to take the path of evil.

## CHAPTER XXI

*Adventures of Madame D.—Her temptation—The amorous officer—The husband's trap—An assignation—The bow-legged basset-hound—The young wife's disgrace—She is placed in a convent—Spies and persecutors—Attempted suicide—She quits the convent—Her lover returns—Their meetings discovered—The husband furious—He shuts Madame D. up in a mad-house—Her devout lover—She escapes to England—Her return to Paris—Another lover—Duel on board the packet-boat—The husband's implacable vengeance—He leaves his wife penniless—Their effeminate son—A Swede falls in love with him—The youth goes mad.*

MADAME LA PRESIDENTE D. was a daughter of Monsieur de N., the governor of Lyons; from her father she received a dowry of 1,600,000 francs.

At the age of thirteen she was married to Monsieur D. It may well be supposed that her parents alone were responsible for this union.

Madame D. was one of the prettiest of pretty little women. So small were her feet that they could hardly carry her; her hands were charming, and her whole person was that of a remarkably fascinating woman.

Despite her extreme youth she gave birth to a son, who was brought up at her home at the time of which I am speaking.

She never went out unless accompanied by her mother-in-law. This mentor followed her everywhere. Her husband thus gave up escorting her; in fact, they were rarely seen together.

In society she often met Monsieur de Q., an officer of dragoons, who fell violently in love with her. As he hardly ever got a chance of speaking to her, being hindered by the perpetual presence of the mother-in-law, he one day thought of writing her a letter asking to be allowed to pay her a visit.

The servant who took this letter met Monsieur D. at the door, and, as the latter looked like a valet, he handed him the missive and asked for an answer. Monsieur D. told him to wait and he would soon bring this. A few minutes later he returned, and said, "I am instructed to inform you that your master may come this evening at eight o'clock." The servant accordingly brought back this message. Madame D. knew nothing of the matter; she had gone up to sit with her son's nurse, her usual practice of an evening, and had been there about one hour when they announced Monsieur de Q., who was waiting below. The visit of a young officer to her house was such an extraordinary event that the young wife was in a state of great trepidation. She hurried

downstairs, intending<sup>b</sup> to send Monsieur de Q. away as soon as possible, to whom, with the imprudence of a child, she showed<sup>c</sup> her alarm at his visit, fearing that her mother-in-law or her husband might get to know of it. The young officer replied that he would never have ventured to call upon her if she herself, that very day, had not invited<sup>d</sup> him to do so, stating, in reply<sup>e</sup> to his letter, that he might come at eight o'clock. On learning this, the lady's terror increased, since she was totally ignorant of anything of the sort, and she once more entreated Monsieur de Q. to go. But he, seeing how difficult it was to get to see her, was in no hurry to take his leave, and the more she begged him to go the more he sought to profit by this brief chance of declaring his passion. Overcome by fear, Madame D. sank down on a couch. Monsieur de Q. took a seat at her side. Perceiving her agitation, he said, "Now do tell me something about this awful husband of yours who inspires you with such terror. I have never met him anywhere in society. Describe him to me; what is he like?"

"What is he like?" rejoined this foolish young woman; "why, he's like a bow-legged basset-hound!"

At these words a hand vigorously clutched her leg from below, while another seized that of Monsieur de Q. and pinned him to the couch. The husband's trap had succeeded.

President D. continued to shout "Thief! thief!" until footmen enough came running in to make the officer's escape impossible. Then he released his hold of his two victims, and emerged from his hiding-place.

I say "his two victims," because this man, who should have been the guide and protector of his young wife, lost her for ever by this scandal. It was he alone who drove her to the evil path she has since pursued.

The subsequent scene may well be imagined. Madame D. fainted, while her mother-in-law and the aged President both hurried in on hearing their son's shouts. This worthy veteran, whose name as a magistrate has always commanded esteem, strongly condemned his son's conduct. He sought to hush up the affair and prevent publicity, but so infuriated was the husband that this proved impossible. Angry at being thus entrapped, Monsieur de Q. demanded satisfaction. Monsieur D.'s cloth allowed him to refuse a challenge; thus no duel could be fought.

Next day, in spite of her father-in-law's entreaties, Madame D. was placed in a convent; while Monsieur de Q. rejoined his regiment, hoping that his absence might mitigate the harsh treatment evidently in store for the unfortunate young lady.

This scene, the scandal it caused in society, and the trouble it brought upon Madame D., served to

change what might perhaps only have been but a mere passing fancy into a veritable passion. On leaving Paris Monsieur de Q. instructed one of his valets to keep him informed as to everything concerning Madame D.

She, poor lady, bored with the monotony of the convent life to which she was doomed, and weary of an existence that could, as she thought, never prove happy, determined to kill herself. She put some pence into a cupful of vinegar, and drank the solution thus obtained. The poison, however, was not powerful enough; she became very ill, but they succeeded in saving her life. This attempted suicide caused her father-in-law to intercede afresh; and at last, after much deliberation, it was agreed that she should leave the convent, and be sent to stay for six months with an old relative, the Maréchale de M., at her estate near Valence.

"They must be clever folk who can trick me," quoth the Maréchale. "Be quite easy. I'll answer for it that she will be as safe in my house as at the convent." They set off. The Maréchale drove away first, smothered up in a dozen cushions and as many lap-dogs. Madame D. followed in another conveyance.

A few stages from Paris she noticed a courier in livery travelling by the same route and apparently watching her carriage. When sure that she and her maid were alone he doffed the hat which almost hid

his face, and she recognised Monsieur de Q. Through his valet he had got to know of the projected journey, and at once hastened back to Paris. He obtained leave of absence, and wished to spend it in the neighbourhood of the Maréchale's demesne, where Madame D. was to remain a prisoner. At first she refused, being desirous to remain faithful to her husband, who, in a way, had himself flung her into her lover's arms. But, as we all know, women have two powers at work within them that are not always in harmony, and one impulse sometimes paralyses the good intentions of the other. Alas! this is what occurred. The will to be prudent proved the weaker of the two.

The old Maréchale travelled very slowly, and often stopped on the road. Every evening the handsome courier took up his quarters in the same hotel. If the old lady met him she never recognised him; besides, she would never have condescended to give so much as a glance at a man in livery. Thus her much vaunted surveillance failed at the very outset. As soon as they reached the château, Monsieur de Q. found lodgings in a cottage close by, and Love saw to it that he and his *inamorata* often met.

Towards the close of the Maréchale's stay there was an attempt to induce Monsieur D. to let his wife be placed as outside-boarder in a convent at Chaillot. She would have every comfort, besides

enjoying greater liberty, than if lodged within the walls. To this proposal he consented.

Unfortunately, Madame D., being very young and very imprudent, still thought that she was in the leafy glades of the Maréchale's park, and still believed that she could hide her lover from the world's eye. Alas! convent walls proved more transparent than shady woods. Ere long the President heard of her meetings with Monsieur de Q., when his fury knew no bounds. He applied for and obtained a warrant for her arrest and detention in a lunatic asylum, the one chosen being at Montrouge.

One day, on returning from a walk, Madame D. found the courtyard full of mounted gendarmes, who forthwith made her their prisoner, and conducted her to the asylum in question.

All the efforts of Monsieur D. to win his wife's affection were misguided and futile. The more she was persecuted the greater grew her lover's passion.

Like a real hero of romance, full of chivalrous feeling, he reproached himself for the poor lady's downfall, since, without him and his ill-starred love for her, she might still have stayed peaceably in her own home. He now deemed it his duty to devote his whole life to her, and by surrounding her with loving attentions he hoped, in some measure, to compensate her for her lost fame.

Judge, then, of his despair on hearing of her



arrest. It was with great difficulty that he could discover any news as to her fate; but at last he tracked her to her hideous prison. Soon he found a way of corresponding with her, and proposed a method of escape. He obtained passports for England; the keepers were bought over at enormous cost; the watch-dogs were poisoned. Being very small, Madame D. was made to climb out through a little window above a gateway, and thence they lifted her over the garden walls. A post-chaise waited without, and soon she was safe in her lover's arms. But it was not he, but his valet, who should escort her to England. The same night Monsieur de Q. made a point of appearing everywhere in society. He went to the opera, and afterwards to a ball, and this precaution prevented him from being compromised in the abduction. Everyone knew that it must have been his handiwork, yet all the malevolence of Monsieur D. might never avail to furnish proof of this. After all due precaution, the lover set out in hot haste for London, and for several years, when not serving with his regiment, he continued to reside in England.

The deep interest shown for Madame D. by our ambassador in London, Monsieur de la Luzerne, and, more than this, the cancelling of the warrant for her detention by the Constitutional Assembly, enabled her at last to return to Paris.

Ever faithful, kind and affectionate, Monsieur de

Q. seemed to have devoted his whole life to her. He thought her love for him was as deep as his, and wholly trusted that she was true.

Alas! such faithful, constant love had hitherto been repaid by tender affection—by a firm desire to be true to him; but now another came to claim a share of Madame D.'s regard. Monsieur de L. had met her, and had fallen a victim to her charms. So much did she fear the dangers of temptation which beset her, that she longed to escape before it was too late. She entreated Monsieur de Q. to take her back to England. She preferred to remain there, she said.

He could not understand this sudden fancy. "How now?" said he; "hardly have you got back to fair France, for which you ever longed when in London, than you want to leave it again and return to the country you disliked!" She insisted, however; so, ever obedient to her wishes, he acquiesced.

Once on board the packet-boat she believed herself free from the wiles of Monsieur de L., when lo! and behold, there on deck stood the very man from whom she had fled, wrapped in a large cloak. He had heard of her departure, and, following her, had taken a berth in the same steamer.

For Monsieur de Q. this was a painful awakening. He remembered divers circumstances which, added each to each, served to prove convincing. As

a result of this meeting a duel was fought on board the boat.

Both combatants were wounded, albeit not dangerously, yet by his opponent's blood the love of Monsieur de Q. was quenched.

This is the story of Madame D., which, detailed, might fill a folio volume. For all her misconduct her husband had no one but himself to blame. This young woman was ruined entirely through him; for, though she was innocent, he made her appear guilty in the eyes of the world, and encouraged her to justify this opinion.

The President was not merely satisfied with all these arrests and imprisonments. He had received sixteen hundred thousand francs of her dowry. He transferred the bulk of his property to England, and so cleverly did he disperse his fortune that, at his death, not a penny of it could be recovered.

Such conduct on the part of Monsieur D. is the more blameworthy because he had a son who, by this act, was left penniless. However, he subsequently inherited a fortune from his aunt, who left him twenty thousand livres a year. He then allowed his mother an annuity of a hundred louis. To her this son owed his delicate constitution. His feet and hands were just like a woman's, and his voice had a squeaky, feminine timbre. One of his favourite amusements was to dress up as a woman and go to the opera balls. One whole

Carnival season he was pursued by a Swede, who fell madly in love with him, and never missed a single ball in the hopes of meeting him. This foreigner was in despair when the mystery was a mystery no longer. Monsieur D. had much caustic wit; he might be described as a nicely-bound pocket-volume of anecdotes. Poor young man! For the last few years he has been out of his mind, and is now in an asylum in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine.

## CHAPTER XXII

*Dangers of independence—My life-lesson—Napoleon's return on the 20th of March—The destinies of France bound up with him—France's welfare requires his death—Murderers may save their country—My plot to shoot the Emperor—I practise shooting at Lepage's—I confide in Prince de Polignac—The power of his smile—My assassination scheme fails—Prince de Polignac and the infernal machine—My unbiassed opinion—My contempt for what the world says—My criticism of Napoleon—The iron hand and the velvet glove—Servility of the Imperial press—My firm convictions—Conclusion.*

WHEN writing this account of the main events of my life with its remarkable vicissitudes, I thought that in portraying the causes of such vicissitudes I might offer a useful lesson to those young wives who, like myself, enjoyed all too great independence.

I have already said that it is not our early education which has most influence upon our after life; it is the second one, during our period of adolescence, that needs careful supervision. The independence of part of my youth was the fault of circumstances, not of my dear, good mother, from whom I was almost separated. It was in these

early years that my naturally imaginative temperament took on that extra touch of exaltation, of high-falutinism which, far more than prudence or reason, has since regulated all my actions. A resolve of mine, swayed by such overwrought sentiment, might have led to results so great and so important that I must speak of it here.

On the 20th of March, when I heard that Napoleon had landed, I at once foresaw all the ills that his return would bring. Not only did I surmise that our beautiful France would again be conquered, but of all the dreaded woes this second one, involving yet deeper moral degradation, most distressed me.

The year before I had felt indignant at seeing all Napoleon's former vassals following in the wake of Monsieur. I divined all the shameful events of which we were now about to be witnesses, and I determined, at the price of my life, to save my country from such dishonour.

It was less bloodshed than our national glory that I desired to save. The moment Napoleon landed I was astonished at the measures adopted to check his advance.

I am but a weak woman, whose faculties are comprised in a grain or so of common sense, yet had I been in the place of those in authority, I should have acted in an absolutely different way.

Far from sending troops to meet him, I should have been careful to keep all of them away from his path, and, as he advanced from the south, I should have moved all the regiments northwards which he might have encountered *en route*. I should have taken particular care that he did not get in touch with any of the veterans whom once he had led to victory; on the contrary, I should have kept them away from him as far as possible.

That an army cannot judge of things is obvious. The soldier can fight, can die, but it is not he who can say if the man who possesses power will not abuse it. It is not the soldier who can judge which sort of government best suits his country; so great a question as this ought never to be submitted to him for decision.

When these soldiers were bidden to attack the very general who had so often led them on to victory, it was only to be foreseen that they would join his triumphal procession to protect and assure his return to the capital.

I have never been able to conceive how so simple an idea as this did not strike everybody. If every commander of every garrison station along Napoleon's route had withdrawn his men and sent these elsewhere, it would have been easy to arrest the Emperor, since his only escort was a handful of troops that he had brought with him from Elba.

But when I saw what means had been employed, I surmised that all was lost. It was then that a strange and startling plan came into my head and absorbed all my thoughts.

Seeing this threatening hydra making for us, I bethought me that the arm that checked its progress would assuredly deserve well of its country. The lives of Frenchmen, their treasures, their honour—with these it was that Napoleon's return would be bought. On the life of him who hardly ever spared anyone else's hung all the destinies of France. Every reasonable being could foresee what these destinies were. It was impossible in her present state of disunion and revolt that France should not succumb to the force of the arms directed against her, and what torrents of blood must flow ere this great strife could close!

When such grave interests depended upon one single life, I could not conceive how this had not yet been taken. This man had caused thousands of his fellow-creatures to perish, yet not one came forward to die for his country's weal! Such an act seemed to me grand, heroic; I envied the glory that would cover its perpetrator. That such an act was a crime never for a moment entered my head. The duellist who kills his adversary loses nothing in public opinion. Why? Because in taking the life of his enemy he exposes his own. The possibility



of being killed himself (though<sup>•</sup> most uncertain) removes from this act all the stigma attaching to murder.

Yet the duellist is only avenging his own private wrong! Far more did the man who, with no chance of escaping certain death, yet can sacrifice himself for the public good—far more did such a man seem to me to deserve universal homage. My imagination placed his name with those who are reckoned as the saviours of their country. I said to myself that it was with admiration<sup>•</sup> that they spoke of Scevola, when he burned the hand that missed Porsenna.

My overwrought imagination for ever kept presenting this idea to me; it haunted me in my dreams; it haunted me by day. I believed that this honour was reserved for me; one thought alone served to check my resolution—I did not like Napoleon!

I thought that my aversion for him might interfere with my judgment. This act—worthy of admiration in centuries to come—would but have been considered a mere vulgar crime if any personal animus had prompted its commission.

I looked into my heart. I could but find there a passionate longing to save France.

Directly my great resolve was made, I thought how best the deed might be achieved, and my actual position made this very difficult. I was surrounded

by friends; my husband was with me. I could in no way trust either them or him. They would have kept constant watch upon my movements to prevent the catastrophe.

My plan was a simple one; it was to provide myself with a good brace of pistols and a post-chaise. I felt certain of being able to get close to Napoleon. It never entered into my head that I should survive him; I believed that I should fall beneath the blows of the friends who surrounded him. More than that, it was this certitude that emboldened me to make the attempt. My blood must be shed if the deed was to deserve praise from posterity. My first step towards this end was to practise shooting at Lepage's galleries, which were close by.

Napoleon had already advanced so far, and I had so little time left if I wished his death to prevent the King's departure, that I had to hasten matters, and found it necessary to take someone into my confidence. At the moment I could not purchase a post-chaise without my husband hearing of it. Among my acquaintances, I selected one who was sufficiently devoted to the King's cause to keep my secret. I thought that the Prince de Polignac might promptly supply me with the vehicle that I required. His devotion to the King made me feel sure that he would approve of my scheme.

Unfortunately, the Prince did not know that I had in me as much courage to do the deed as enthusiasm to conceive it. Perhaps he thought such devotion was mere midsummer madness. He told me that we ought to leave things in the hands of Providence, which knew better than we did how to save us from the coming crisis.

I do not know if it was the expression on his bland countenance which undeceived me, but I seemed to detect a faint smile that played about his lips. This fleeting, almost imperceptible smile of his had a marvellous effect upon me; it was a shock as sudden, as violent as that of an ice-bath. The halo of glory with which I had surrounded my name disappeared in an instant. On leaving the Prince, I was like one who sees the walls of an enchanted palace crumbling about him, and, forlorn in some dreary wilderness, awakes. The dream of glory was over. A smile had sufficed to break the spell.

My mind was at once made up. I returned to my home, and there resolved to await the further issue of events.

How rapidly these succeeded each other everyone knows. All the official corporations came to offer the Royal Family the assurance of their loyal and respectful devotion. Then, a few days afterwards, they deliberately broke their word.

Ah! what I had to suffer! Whenever the news

of some fresh act of perfidy transpired, I thought that the blame lay with me for having faltered, for not executing my noble scheme, for letting so slight a thing deter me. Of this scheme neither my relatives nor my friends knew anything, only Prince de Polignac. In publishing the facts to-day, I consider that it is an act of justice to himself. I take little interest in politics, and do not read all the papers which, however, I daily receive. In one that I saw lately, he was actually accused of being the promoter of the infernal machine. I leave it to every reasonable person to say if the man who stopped my avenging arm as it was about to strike Napoleon could have anything to do with the infernal machine. Bonaparte alone had to die; his death would only endanger my life, and it would save France. The immense interest attaching to this death had much to justify it, yet, for all that, Prince de Polignac did not wish it to occur. His righteous soul thought that this was a crime. When one speaks of a minister, the opinion passed upon him is open to suspicion; similarly it will be thought that my opinion may have been influenced by this consideration, but this would be a great error. I live aloof from society, nor do I claim aught from it. I have not seen M. de Polignac for several years. Nobody has a more independent opinion, perhaps, than myself, nor is anyone less likely than I am to be

influenced by any of those petty considerations which govern society.

It has been said, and they still affirm it, that Napoleon's reign was covered with glory. If by this military glory is meant, it is wrong to make it all spring from himself. In France such glory is independent of Sovereigns, nor is it they in whom the honour of it centres; it belongs wholly to the French temperament. One has only to recall the early victories of the Revolution. We had no experienced generals, no ammunition-stores, no arms; yet we marched single-handed against all Europe, with what results it is well known.

Far from saying that Napoleon's reign brought honour to the French nation, I maintain that it debased and degraded it, that it made us lose our national characteristics. Such despotism caused all foreheads to be bowed in the dust.

Men most distinguished by their brilliant intellectual gifts were prostrated at his feet far more through fear than through admiration. One noble voice alone made itself heard in the cause of humanity, and told the despot that by degrading the nation subject to his will all the glory of sovereignty departed. The high-spirited conduct of M. de Chateaubriand at this epoch entitles him to a place among the world's greatest men far more than his admirable genius.

It is but a painful task for me to express my opinion as to this reign, which others have so loudly extolled. With the exception of M. de Chateaubriand, who had the courage to pit his will against that of the Emperor, all the others, as I take it, were only slaves bent beneath the yoke. Far from letting glory accrue to us from this reign, we should, if possible, forget it, and tear<sup>d</sup> out this page from the book of history on which so many mementoes dishonouring to the nation stand inscribed.

They say that the French ought to be ruled with a hand of iron in a velvet glove.<sup>1</sup> We have felt the hand of iron. All its weight was laid upon us by Napoleon, but he never let us perceive the velvet glove. When sometimes reading the papers, I am surprised to find, side by side with criticisms of our government, eulogy for this so-called glorious reign. Which of them would have dared to make the slightest observation concerning any act on the part of this infallible power? Even the veil of allegory was not thick enough to hide certain faint signs of disapprobation. Whoever had dared to make use of such allegory would straightway have been punished by exile or imprisonment.

It may, perhaps, be thought that Napoleon's downfall and the changes which supervened will

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1 The phrase is attributed to Bernadotte.

have influenced my opinions here set forth. Yet it was when he was at the zenith of his power that my judgment of him was formed.

All my life nearly I have been in the habit, each evening, of recording daily impressions and experiences—fleeting thoughts and notes which, if not written down, would have vanished. During my journey with Josephine I continued to write my diary every evening.

It is a copy of this diary which M. Constant published. One may perceive that the opinion uttered when Napoleon is no more than a name in history differs in no measure from that which was pronounced when he ruled the world. So true is this, that, when lately re-perusing this diary, which I had not read since the time it was written, I was almost amazed at the severity of my criticisms.

At that time I had read the account of Bonaparte's sufferings at St. Helena, when pity softened such severity. In order not to find certain expressions all too bitter, I had to remember that to him it was we owed the degradation of Frenchmen crushed beneath his despotic yoke, and that it was he who sullied our military glory by the heedless folly of his pride.

[END OF THE REMINISCENCES OF MADAME  
LA BARONNE DE V.]

## CHAPTER XXIII

*Further success—General Beaumont—Colonel Gérard—A hundred and forty standards captured—General Savary, Marshal Mortier and Prince Murat—Departure from Berlin—Accident to Marshal Duroc—The Emperor at Warsaw—His reception by the Polish nobles—He meets Madame V.—Portrait of this lady—The Emperor's agitation—His advances are repulsed—He is upset—Correspondence and consent—The assignation—Tears and sobs—The interview without result—Another is arranged—Madame V. at Finkenstein—Her affection for the Emperor—Their meal tête-à-tête—Constant their sole attendant—Madame V.'s charming temper—She stays at Schœnbrunn—Constant's mysterious commission—The carriage upset—Nothing serious—Constant supports Madame V.—Her pregnancy—The Emperor's solicitude—The little house in the Chaussée d'Anton—Birth of a son—Napoleon's delight—The baby made a Count—Madame V. takes her son to the Emperor—The young Count saved by Dr. Corvisart—The hair, the ring, and the motto—The La Vallière of the Empire—Favourites of the Victor of Austerlitz.*

I LEFT the Emperor at Berlin, where every day and every hour brought him news of some fresh victory, of some success achieved by his generals. General Beaumont presented him with eighty stan-



dards captured by his division from the enemy. Colonel Gérard also had captured sixty from Blücher at the battle of Wismar. Magdeburg had capitulated, and a garrison of 16,000 men had been captured by General Savary. Marshal Mortier had taken possession of Hanover, while Prince Murat entered Warsaw, after driving out the Russians.

It was against these that war was now to be begun, or rather continued; for the armies of Prussia might well be considered demolished. The Emperor left Berlin to direct his operations against the Russians in person.

We travelled in the little carriages peculiar to the country. As usual, the Grand Marshal's conveyance preceded that of the Emperor. The stormy season and the passing of the artillery had made the roads vile; nevertheless, we went along at a great rate. Between Katow and Warsaw the Grand Marshal's carriage upset, and he fractured his collar-bone. The Emperor arrived shortly after this unfortunate accident, when he caused the Marshal to be carried to the nearest post-house. We always had surgical appliances with us when travelling, so that the patient soon received prompt attention. His Majesty entrusted his head surgeon with the task, nor did he leave the patient until the first bandages had been applied. At Warsaw, where His Majesty spent the whole of January, 1807, he resided at the large

palace. The Polish nobles, eager to pay court to him, gave splendid *fêtes* and brilliant balls in his honour, at which all the wealthiest and most distinguished society of Warsaw was present. At one of these assemblies the Emperor noticed Madame V., a young Polish lady, aged twenty-two, who had just married an old nobleman, sour tempered, rigidly moral, and more enamoured of his titles than of his wife, of whom, however, he was very fond, albeit her feeling for him was less one of love than of respect. The Emperor took a great fancy to the lady; she attracted him at first sight. She was fair, with blue eyes and a complexion of dazzling whiteness. Though not tall, she was beautifully proportioned, with a charming figure. The Emperor, approaching her, entered into a conversation with her, which she carried on in a graceful, witty style, showing that she had received a brilliant education. A faint suggestion of melancholy gave additional charm to her whole personality. The Emperor thought he recognised in her a woman sacrificed, and who was unhappy in her home; this interest in her only quickened his love, inspiring him with greater passion than he had ever felt for any woman. Of this, indeed, she must have been aware.

The day after the ball the Emperor seemed to me to be unusually agitated. He got up, walked to and fro, sat down, and then got up again; in fact, I thought I should never finish dressing him that day.

Directly after breakfast he commissioned an exalted personage who shall be nameless, to convey his compliments and good wishes to Madame V. Proposals, if made in too brusque a fashion, she would no doubt haughtily reject, prompted, perhaps, to do so by feminine coquetry. The hero had taken her fancy; the idea of a lover lustrous with power and glory filled her imagination, yet she never thought to yield thus without a struggle. The exalted personage came back greatly confused and astonished at the non-success of his mission. The day afterwards, when the Emperor rose, I noticed that he was still preoccupied. He never said a word to me, though usually he conversed with me while dressing. The evening before he had written several times to Madame V., who had sent him no reply. His dignity was deeply wounded by a resistance to which he was unaccustomed. At last he wrote so many letters, so affectionate and so touching, that finally Madame V. yielded. She consented to come and see the Emperor that evening, between ten and eleven o'clock. The exalted personage before mentioned received instructions to fetch her in a carriage and take her to the place of meeting. While waiting for her, the Emperor strode up and down and displayed as much emotion as impatience. Every minute he kept asking me what time it was. Madame V. at last arrived, but in what a state! Pale, speechless and with her

eyes filled with tears. As soon as she appeared I took her to the Emperor's room. She could hardly walk, and leant tremblingly upon my arm. Having conducted her to the apartment, I withdrew with the dignitary who had escorted her. During this *tête-à-tête* with the Emperor Madame V. wept and sobbed in the most heartrending manner. It is probable that at this first interview the Emperor did not succeed in obtaining anything from her. About two o'clock in the morning His Majesty called me. I hastened to the room just as Madame V. came out, her handkerchief to her eyes, sobbing bitterly. She was escorted to her home by the same personage. I never expected that she would return.

However, two or three days afterwards, about the same time as on the first occasion, Madame V. came back to the palace, when she seemed calmer. Her charming face showed signs of great emotion, but her eyes were tearless and her cheeks less pale. She left again early in the morning, and continued to visit the Emperor in this way until his departure.

Two months afterwards, from his headquarters at Finkenstein, the Emperor wrote to Madame V., who made haste to obey the summons. His Majesty had apartments prepared for her which communicated with his own. Here she was installed, and never quitted the Palace of Finkenstein, having left her old husband behind in Warsaw, who, wounded in his

honour and in his affections, refused to set eyes again upon his truant wife. Madame V. stayed three weeks with the Emperor, until his departure, when she returned to her relatives. During all this time she never ceased to show affection of the deepest, most disinterested kind for the Emperor. He, for his part, seemed thoroughly to appreciate the lovable qualities of this angelic woman, whose sweet, unselfish nature I can never forget. They always took their meals together, I being their sole attendant, so that I could enjoy listening to their conversation; the Emperor's being always affectionate and amiable, while hers was full of tenderness, melancholy and passion. When His Majesty was absent, Madame V. spent all her time in reading or in looking out of window at the parades and reviews, which he often held in person. Her life, like her temper, was always even, always uniform. It was her disposition which charmed the Emperor, and made him ever more fond of her.

After the battle of Wagram, in 1809, the Emperor went to stay at the Palace of Schoenbrunn. He at once sent for Madame V., for whom he had taken a delightful house in the outskirts of Vienna, close to Schoenbrunn. I used mysteriously to fetch her every evening in a closed carriage, without armorial bearings, driven by a coachman who did not wear livery. I introduced her into the palace by a secret door, and conducted her to the Emperor's apart-

ments. The road, though short, was not without danger, especially in rainy weather, because of the ruts and holes everywhere. The Emperor used to say to me every evening, "Be very careful to-night, Constant, as it rained to-day, and the road must be bad. Are you sure that the coachman can be trusted? Is the carriage in sound condition?" These and similar questions showed how sincerely attached he was to Madame V. The Emperor, indeed, was not wrong in recommending me to be careful, for one evening, on leaving Madame V.'s house rather later than usual, the coachman upset us. In trying to avoid a rut, he overturned the carriage on the side of the road. I was sitting to the right of Madame V.; the carriage turned over on its right side, so that I alone suffered from the shock, while Madame V., falling on top of me, was not at all hurt. I was glad that I had been able to protect her from injury. I told her so, and she expressed her gratitude with a grace such as she alone possessed. I soon got over my shaking, and was the first to make merry over our unlucky spill. Madame V. laughed, too, as she told His Majesty about the accident.

It was at Schœnbrunn that Madame V. became pregnant. I will not attempt to describe all the care and attention which the Emperor showed towards her. He had her brought to Paris, accompanied by her brother, a distinguished officer, and a maid. He

instructed the Grand Marshal to purchase for her a handsome house in the Chaussée d'Antin. Here Madame V. was happily installed, and she often used to say to me, "All my thoughts, all my inspirations spring from, and are centred in, him; he is my one joy, my future, my life!" Nor did she ever leave her house except to come to the little apartments at the Tuileries. When such happiness was denied her, she never sought distraction by visiting the theatre, by driving out, or by going into society. She stayed at home, only seeing a very few people, and writing to the Emperor every day.

She gave birth to a son, who bore a striking resemblance to His Majesty. The Emperor was greatly delighted at this. As soon as he could escape from the palace, he hastened to her bedside, took the child in his arms, and embraced it, after kissing its mother, saying, "I create you a Count." Later on, we shall see how, at Fontainebleau, this son received from the Emperor a last mark of attachment.

Madame V. brought up her son at home, and never left him. She often took him to the palace, where I let them come up by the Dark Staircase. If either of them were ill, the Emperor sent M. Corvisart to attend them. This skilful physician fortunately saved the young Count on one occasion from a dangerous malady.

Madame V. had a ring made for the Emperor,

of gold, round which was twisted some of her beautiful fair hair. Inside, it bore the inscription, "*When you have ceased to love me, forget not that I love you still.*" The Emperor used to call her Marie.

Perhaps I have dwelt overlong upon the subject of this amour of the Emperor's, but Madame V. was totally different from all the other women whose favours His Majesty enjoyed. She was worthy of being styled the Emperor's La Vallière; and he at any rate did not prove ungrateful towards her, as did Louis Quatorze towards the only woman by whom he was beloved. Those who, like myself, had the good fortune to know her, and to be closely associated with her, must keep such a pleasant remembrance of her that they will understand why, to my thinking, there is such a vast difference between Madame V., an affectionate, modest woman, bringing up in the privacy of her own home the son whom she bore to the Emperor, and all the "favourites" of the victor of Austerlitz.



## CHAPTER XXIV

*The Polish campaign—Battle of Eylau—"Te Deum," not "De Profundis"—The Prince de Ponte-Corvo—Death of General d'Hautpoul—General Ordener's good blow—General Corbier's presentiments—Constant advances him money a few moments before his death—Enthusiasm of the Poles—Ill-humour of the French—The basis of the Polish language—Misery and mirth—Hilarity of the troops at the Emperor's reply—The Persian Ambassador—General Gardanne is sent to Persia—The Emperor at Finkenstein—The Emperor cheats at cards—He shaves his winnings with Constant—Bet won by the Duke of Vicenza—How Monsieur d'A. was hoaxed—Prince Jerome in love with a Breslau actress—She marries his valet—The Emperor and his brothers—Marshal Lefebvre made Duke of Dantzic—The Dantzic chocolate—Battle of Friedland—The Emperor's merriment during the fight—Peace with Russia—Interview between Czar and Emperor at Tilsit—The King and Queen of Prussia—Napoleon's gallantry—Rudeness of the Grand Duke Constantine—Military banquet—Concert by Baskirs—Constant visits them—A meal in the Cossack style—Archery—Constant's success as a bowman—Napoleon gives decorations to the Russian soldiery—We return through Bautzen and Dresden to France.*

THE Russians were spurred on to this campaign by the remembrance of the defeat at Austerlitz and by the fear of losing Poland. The winter weather did

not deter them and they resolved to attack the Emperor forthwith. He, however, needed no warning, but moved his winter quarters and left Warsaw at the end of January. On the 8th of February the two armies met at Eylau, and there, as we know, a most bloody battle was fought, both sides displaying equal bravery. On the battlefield some fifteen thousand men lay dead, as many French as Russians. The gain, or rather the loss, was the same for both armies; and a *Te Deum* was chanted at St. Petersburg, as also in Paris, instead of a *De Profundis*, which would have been far more suitable. On returning to head-quarters, His Majesty bitterly complained of the non-execution of an order given to Marshal Bernadotte, whose body of men had no part in the day's battle. The victory, which remained indecisive between the Emperor and General Bennigsen, would, as it seems, have been won by the former if a perfectly fresh army corps had arrived upon the scene of action, as His Majesty had calculated. As ill-luck would have it, the aide-de-camp carrying the despatch to the Prince de Ponte-Corvo fell into the hands of the Cossacks. When, next day, the Emperor got to know this, his anger abated, but not his chagrin. Our troops bivouacked on the battlefield, which His Majesty thrice visited, giving help to the wounded and burying the dead.

Generals d'Hautpoul, Corbineau and Boussier were mortally wounded at Eylau. I still seem to hear

brave d'Hautpoul saying to His Majesty, before he galloped to the charge, "Sire, you should just see my big heels; they slip into the enemy's ranks like butter!" An hour later and he was no more. One of his regiments was blown and hacked to pieces by the Cossacks; only eighteen men escaped. General d'Hautpoul, thrice driven back, had to charge again and again. The third time he dashed forward, shouting, "Charge, cuirassiers! For God's sake charge, my brave cuirassiers!" But the guns had cut down too many of these plucky fellows, and only a few were able to follow their leader, who was cut to pieces by the Russians, at whom he rode almost alone.

It was also in this battle that General Ordener killed one of the enemy's generals with his own hand. The Emperor asked how it was that he did not take him prisoner. "Sire," replied the General, with his strong German accent, "I only strike one blow, but I try to make it a good hard one."

The same day as the battle, in the morning, General Corbineau, aide-de-camp to the Emperor, was breakfasting with the officers on duty when he told them that he was full of the gloomiest presentiments. These gentlemen sought to cheer him up, and made fun of the matter. A few moments afterwards General Corbineau received an order from His Majesty. Being in want of money, and as M. de Ménéval could not supply him, he

came to ask me for some, and I made him an advance from the Emperor's privy purse. Some hours later I met M. de Ménéval, to whom I told the circumstance, and we were still talking when an officer riding past at full gallop gave us the sad news of the General's death. Never have I forgotten the impression which this made upon me, and to-day I cannot rightly explain those strange forebodings which suddenly gave warning to this brave fellow of his approaching end.

Poland counted upon the Emperor to help her to regain her independence; and when they saw the French army arrive, the Poles were full of enthusiasm and hope.

As for our own troops, this winter campaign was thoroughly distasteful to them; the cold, their countless privations, the bad weather and the bad roads, inspired them with deep aversion for Poland. At a review at Warsaw, when the townsfolk crowded round our troops, a soldier vehemently cursed the snow and the mud, as well as Poland and the Poles. "It is very wrong of you, Mr. Soldier," cried a girl belonging to a well-to-do family of the tradesman class, "not to like our country, for we are all of us so fond of the French."

"I have no doubt you're very nice, mademoiselle," replied the soldier, "but if you want to convince me of the truth of what you say,

you'll give my comrade and myself a jolly good dinner."

"Come along, sirs," cried the girl's parents, stepping forward in their turn, "we'll all drink your Emperor's health together." And they took the two soldiers with them, and gave them the best dinner that they ever got during the whole campaign.

The troops used to say that the Polish language was based upon four words, *kleba*, "any bread?" *niema*, "there isn't any"; *vora*, "any water?" *sara*, "they're bringing some."

One day, as the Emperor was riding past a column of infantry near Mysignicz, where the mud had cut off supplies and the troops suffered great privations, a soldier called out to him, "Papa, *kleba*!" "*Niema*," promptly replied the Emperor. The whole column burst into a roar of laughter, and henceforth there was not another murmur.

During the somewhat lengthy stay of the Emperor at Finkenstein, he received a visit from a Persian Ambassador, in whose honour several reviews were held. His Majesty, in his turn, sent an Embassy to the Shah, at the head of which was General Gardanne, who, as they said, had private reasons for wishing to go to Persia. One of his relatives, after long residence at Teheran, had been obliged to quit the capital in consequence of a rising

against the Franks. Before his flight he had buried considerable treasure in a certain spot, the plan of which he had brought away with him to France. I afterwards heard that General Gardanne found the place overturned and in ruins; in fact, unrecognisable, so that he failed to unearth the treasure, but had to return from his mission empty-handed.

The stay at Finkenstein became very tiresome. To while away the time, His Majesty used occasionally to play at *vingt-et-un* with his generals and aides-de-camp. At this game he loved to cheat, and for several successive deals would keep back in his hand the cards needed to make a natural. It pleased him vastly if he could thus win by cunning. I always gave him the sum he required for his stakes, and he always halved his winnings with me. I used to divide my share with the other valets.

I have no intention in this journal of keeping a strictly chronological sequence. If I happen to remember an event or anecdote worth recording, I shall jot it down anywhere, whenever it occurs to me. By trying to give these their proper place in the narrative, it may chance that I shall forget some of them. Thus, in passing, I can mention one or two incidents belonging to the Tuileries or the Saint-Cloud epochs, albeit at the moment we are in the head-quarters at Finkenstein. It is the pastimes in which His Majesty and the staff indulged which bring such stories to my mind.

These gentlemen often used to make bets. The Duke of Vicenza once bet M. Jardin, junior, His Majesty's equerry, that, mounted backwards, he could not ride right along the avenue within a given time—a few minutes it was. The equerry won his bet.

MM. Fain, Ménéval and Ivan once played Monsieur d'A. a somewhat droll trick. Knowing that he was rather fond of a petticoat, they dressed up a young man in female attire, and, thus disguised, told him to walk up and down an avenue near the château. Being very short-sighted, Monsieur d'A. generally wore an eyeglass. His friends induced him to come for a walk, and no sooner had he got out of doors than he spied the fair promenader, at the sight of whom he could not repress an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

His companions affected to be equally charmed, and, as the most enterprising, they urged him to make the first advances. He accordingly eagerly approached the sham young lady, who had been well drilled in her part. Monsieur d'A. eclipsed himself in polite attentions of every sort, and after much coquettish flirtation on the part of the fair stranger, and sundry ardent protests from Monsieur d'A., a meeting for that same evening was arranged. Full of glad hopes, the lover rejoined his friends, to whom, from motives of discretion, he seemed callous

as to his good fortune, though secretly he longed for the time to elapse that lay between him and his love. At length evening came, and the hour of the yearned-for interview. Yet, what was his rage and disappointment to find that these woman's clothes did but cover a male! At first Monsieur d'A. was for fighting a duel with the authors and the actor of this mystery-play, and it was only with great difficulty that he could be appeased.

It was on the return from this campaign, I think, that Prince Jerome saw, at a theatre in Breslau, a very pretty actress, who acted badly but sang very well. He made advances. They said she was very discreet; but kings do not long sigh in vain—their weight outbalances discretion. His Majesty the King of Westphalia carried off his conquest to Cassel, and, after awhile, married her to Albertoni, his head valet, whose Italian morality was in no way shocked at such a marriage. Some unpleasantness (the reason of which I cannot state) made Albertoni decide to leave the King. He returned to Paris with his wife, and, speculating with her earnings, lost all. I heard that he afterwards returned to Italy. A thing which always struck me as extraordinary was Albertoni's intense jealousy of his wife. He kept his eye on every man that came near, except the King; and I am almost certain that this intimacy continued after her marriage.



The Emperor's brothers, kings though they were, had sometimes to wait in His Majesty's ante-chamber. King Jerome once came at the Emperor's request, who, being still in bed, told me to ask the King of Westphalia to wait.

Shortly after the capture of Dantzic, on the 24th of May, 1807, the Emperor, wishing to reward Marshal Lefebvre for his recent services, sent for him at six o'clock in the morning. His Majesty was at work with a staff officer when the Marshal's arrival was announced. "Oh, oh!" said Napoleon, "Monsieur le Duc has not kept us long waiting. Will you tell the Duke of Dantzic that it was to breakfast with me that I sent for him at this early hour." The officer on duty, thinking the Emperor had mistaken the name, politely pointed out that the person awaiting his orders was not the Duke of Dantzic but Marshal Lefebvre. "Apparently, sir," said the Emperor, "you think me more capable of making a Count<sup>1</sup> than a Duke!" The orderly officer was momentarily disconcerted by this reply, but the Emperor smiled reassuringly, and said, "Go and give the Duke my invitation; in a quarter of an hour we shall sit down to table."

The officer went back to the Marshal, who was very anxious to know what Napoleon had to say to him. "My Lord Duke, the Emperor desires

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1 A play upon the word *conte*.

you to take breakfast with him, and begs you will wait a quarter of an hour." Not noticing this new title given to him by the officer, the Marshal bowed, and sat down on a chair, above which hung the Emperor's sword, which he reverently and admiringly touched. When the quarter of an hour had expired, another orderly officer came to conduct the Marshal to His Majesty. The Emperor was already seated at table, with Marshal Berthier. On seeing him, Napoleon shook hands with him and said, "Good day, Duke; come, and sit next to me."

Amazed at hearing himself styled Duke, the Marshal at first thought that His Majesty was joking, but, being again addressed thus, he was momentarily taken aback. To increase his embarrassment, the Emperor said to him, "Do you like chocolate, Duke?"

"Why . . . yes, Sire."

"Very well, you shan't breakfast off it, but I am going to make you a present of a pound of it, made in Dantzic itself, for, since you have captured the town, it's only fair that you should have something from it."

The Emperor hereupon left the table, and, opening a small box, took out an oblong-shaped packet and gave it to the Marshal, saying, "Duke of Dantzic, accept this chocolate; little presents promote friendship."

The Marshal thanked His Majesty, put the chocolate into his pocket, and sat down to table with the Emperor and Marshal Berthier. A pasty, representing the town of Dantzic, was in the centre of the table, and, when the time came to help it, the Emperor said, "Nothing could have pleased me more than the shape of that pasty. Attack it, Duke, attack it; there's your conquest, so it is for you to do the honours." The Duke obeyed, and the three fell to eating the pasty, which they found greatly to their liking.

On returning to his own quarters, Marshal Lefebvre, suspecting it contained some surprise, hastened to open the packet, which he found contained one hundred thousand crowns in bank-notes. Ever since this munificent gift, it became the fashion in the army to call all money, whether coin or notes, "Dantzic chocolate"; and when the soldiers wanted to make a comrade who was in funds treat them, they would say to him, "Now then, come along; you've got some Dantzic chocolate in your knapsack, eh?"

The Emperor's extreme superstition about dates and anniversaries was once more justified by the victory of Friedland, won on the 14th of June, 1807, seven years to a day after the battle of Marengo. The rigorous winter, the difficulty of obtaining provisions (though the Emperor endeavoured to overcome this

with all care and forethought possible), and the dogged bravery of the Russian troops, made this campaign a most trying one, even for the victors, who, in Prussia, had been used to speedy conquests.

The divided glory at Eylau, divided with the Russians, was something quite new in the Emperor's military career. At Friedland he regained his former superiority. By a feigned retreat, and by letting the enemy only see a part of his forces, Napoleon lured the Russians beyond the Elbe, so that they found themselves shut in between that river and our army. The victory was won by the troops of the line and the cavalry; the Emperor did not find it necessary to let his guards take part in the battle. The Czar's body-guard was almost annihilated while covering the retreat, or rather the flight of the Russians, who could only escape by the Friedland bridge, a few narrow pontoons, and a ford that was all but impracticable.

All the French line-regiments were engaged in this battle. The Emperor, stationed on heights commanding a view of the whole plain, sat in an arm-chair close to a mill. He was surrounded by his staff, and I never saw him so merry, as he chatted with the generals awaiting his orders, and seemed pleased to eat the Russian black bread, moulded in the shape of a brick, made of inferior rye, and full of long pieces of straw; this bread was

served out to all the troops, and every man knew that His Majesty ate it, too.

Splendid weather favoured the skilful manœuvres of our troops, who performed prodigious feats of valour. The cavalry charges were executed with such precision that the Emperor repeatedly sent complimentary messages to the several regiments.

About four o'clock p.m., just as the final struggle took place and the roar of thousands of cannon shook the ground, the Emperor exclaimed, "If this lasts another two hours, there will only be the French army in the field." Soon after this he ordered Count d'Orsena, commanding the grenadiers of the old guard, to fire upon a coppice behind which masses of Russians and Prussians were entrenched. In a second they were forced to abandon this position, and fled in wild confusion.

The guards did not go into action until five o'clock; by six o'clock the battle was won. As he saw them deploy, the Emperor said, "It's not any good now, the job's been done, and nicely, too, without their help."

His Majesty went and complimented several regiments that had been under fire all day long. A word or two, a smile, a wave of the hand or a nod of the head, sufficed to requite these valiant conquerors. The number of the dead and of the prisoners was enormous. Seventy standards and all

the baggage of the Russian army fell into the hands of the French.

After this decisive victory, the Czar, who had rejected the Emperor's proposals after Eylau was now most ready to make overtures in his turn. General Bennigsen, in the name of his Sovereign, petitioned for an armistice, which the Emperor granted, and soon afterwards, the famous interview took place on the Niemen between the two monarchs, when peace was signed. I pass rapidly over the details of this meeting; they have been narrated times out of number.

His Majesty and the young Czar became mutually attached to each other at first sight, each entertaining the other with banquets, *fêtes*, and other diversions. Both in public and in private they were inseparable, and spent hours together in various pleasure resorts, from which the importunate were carefully excluded. The town of Tilsit was declared neutral, and French, Russians and Prussians, followed the example set by their Sovereigns, living together in most fraternal intimacy.

The King and Queen of Prussia joined their Imperial Majesties at Tilsit. This ill-starred monarch, who of all his kingdom now possessed hardly a single town, can have felt but little inclination to join in all these festivities. The Queen was handsome and graceful, perhaps a trifle haughty and

severe in manner; yet that did not prevent her from being adored by all who surrounded her. The Emperor sought to be agreeable to her, while she neglected none of the innocent coquetries of her sex in order to fascinate the conqueror of her husband. I saw the Queen several times, when dining with the Royalties. She sat between the two Emperors, who overwhelmed her with gallant attentions. It is well known that the Emperor Napoleon once offered her a superb rose, which, after some hesitation, she accepted, saying to His Majesty, with her most bewitching smile: "At least, with Magdeburg as well." It is also well known that the Emperor did not take the hint.

As lady-in-waiting the Queen had a very old lady who was much respected for her many estimable qualities. One evening, as the Queen was being conducted to the dining-room by the two Emperors, followed by the King of Prussia, Prince Murat and the Grand Duke Constantine, the aged lady-in-waiting moved aside to let the other two Princes pass. The Grand Duke Constantine would not go first, and, spoiling this act of courtesy, he rudely exclaimed, "Pass on, madam, pass on, do!" Then, turning sharp round to Prince Murat, he said, in a tone loud enough for all to hear, "What an old hag!" From this, one may conclude that the Grand Duke was far from having the exquisite

manners towards ladies which distinguished his august brother.

The Imperial French guards once gave a dinner to the Emperor Alexander's guards. The meal was of the merriest description; and as a finish to this brotherly banquet, each French soldier exchanged his uniform for that of a Russian, and *vice versa*. Thus metamorphosed they passed before the Emperors, who were highly amused at such impromptu disguises.

Among the many entertainments offered to our Emperor by the Czar, I may mention a concert given by a troupe of Baskirs whom, for this purpose, their Sovereign fetched across the Niemen. Certainly, music more barbarous never deafened His Majesty's ears. Such weird harmonies, accompanied by gestures equally barbaric, furnished us with the most grotesquely comic spectacle that can well be imagined. A few days after this concert I obtained permission to visit these musicians in their camp, and I went thither with Roustan, who was to act as interpreter. We were so lucky as to be present at a Baskir repast. The men sat in rows, and each held in his hand a piece of black bread which he dipped in a spoonful of water coloured by some substance which resembled red clay. After the meal was over they entertained us by archery. Roustan, whom the pastime reminded of his young days, sought to shoot an arrow, but it



fell a few feet off, and I saw the thick-lipped Baskirs smile contemptuously. Then I had a try, acquitting myself to the satisfaction of our hosts, who at once surrounded me, congratulating me by signs upon my skill and vigour. One of them, more friendly and more enthusiastic than the rest, slapped me on the shoulder with such vehemence, that long afterwards I remembered it.

The day after this famous concert, peace was signed, and the Emperor paid a visit to the Czar, who received him at the head of his guards. Napoleon asked his illustrious ally to point out the bravest man of all that handsome, valiant troop. When he had been chosen, the Emperor took his own cross of the Legion of Honour from his button-hole, and affixed it to the Russian soldier's breast, amid the loud cheers of all his comrades. The two Emperors embraced for the last time on the banks of the Niemen, and His Majesty then set out for Königsberg.

At Bautzen the Emperor was met by the King of Saxony, and Their Majesties entered Dresden together. King Frederick Augustus prepared the most splendid reception possible for the Sovereign, who, not content with giving him a sceptre, had considerably increased the hereditary States of the Electors of Saxony. The worthy townfolk of Dresden, during the week we stopped there, treated

the French more like brothers and compatriots than like allies. But it was nearly ten months since we had left Paris, and in spite of all the simple, frank hospitality of these Germans, I was longing to see France and my family once more.

## CHAPTER XXV

*Death of young Napoleon, the King of Holland's son—The charm of this child—His self-will—His obedience to the Emperor—His affection for him—A pretty family portrait—The shoemaker and the portrait—The Saint-Cloud gazelles—The boy reconciles his parents—The Emperor's affection for his nephew—The heir to the Empire—Forecast of troubles—The first idea of a divorce—The Empress Josephine's grief at the boy's death—Despair of Hortense—General sorrowing for the young Prince.*

IT was during the glorious campaign in Prussia and Poland that the Imperial Family sustained a terrible bereavement by the death of young Prince Napoleon, the King of Holland's eldest son. This boy was very like his father, and consequently very like his illustrious uncle. He had fair hair, but this would probably have become dark in time. His large, expressive blue eyes gleamed again as some fresh impression crossed his childish mind. Kind, affectionate, frank and merry, he was the delight of the Emperor, above all on account of his firmness of character. So great was this that, despite his extreme youth, nothing could prevent

him from keeping his word. The following is a case in point.

He was extremely fond of strawberries, but they always brought on frequent and protracted fits of vomiting. His mother, in alarm, expressly forbade him to have any more, and took every precaution to keep strawberries out of his sight and his reach, this fruit being so harmful to him. Little Napoleon, in no way deterred by consequences, was surprised at never seeing his favourite fruit. At first he was patient, but finally asked his nurse why he was not allowed to have any. She was at a loss for an answer, when he imperiously cried, "I will have strawberries, that I will! Bring me some directly!" The poor nurse, anxious to appease him, said that she would willingly let him have some, only, if they made him ill, she feared that he might tell the Queen how he had got them. "Is that all?" replied the boy, quickly. "Don't be afraid; I promise you not to tell." So the nurse consented. The strawberries produced their customary effect, and the Queen happened to come in just as the young Prince was paying the penalty of his gluttony. He could not deny having eaten the strawberries.

The Queen was vexed, and desired to know who had thus disobeyed her orders. She begged the child to say who it was, and at last she

threatened him; but he only answered, in the coolest manner, "I promised not to tell." Nor, had she given him a whole Empire, could she have got him to reveal the name of the culprit."<sup>1</sup>

Young Prince Napoleon was very fond of his uncle, and when with him he showed greater docility than was his wont. The Emperor often took him on his knee at luncheon; and it amused him to make him eat lentils one by one. The child's pretty face flushed, and his whole expression was one of vexation and impatience, but His Majesty could prolong the game without fear that his nephew would get angry, which with any one else he certainly would have done.

Can it be, that at so tender an age, he perceived the superiority of his uncle to all those about him? King Louis, his father, gave him new toys every day, and he was free to choose those which he liked best. But the child preferred the ones that his uncle had given him, and when his father said to him, "Look, Napoleon, those are ugly ones; mine are the prettiest," the boy would answer, "No, they are very nice ones; my uncle gave them to me."

One morning, when coming in to see His Majesty, he passed through a room full of dignitaries. Among these was Prince Murat, who, at that epoch was, I

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1 Strawberries had a like effect upon the King of Rome.

believe, Grand Duke of Berg. The child walked straight on without saluting anyone, when the Prince stopped him and asked, "Won't you say good morning to me?" "No," replied little Napoleon, disengaging the Grand Duke's arm, "not before I have saluted my uncle, *the Emperor*."

After a review in the courtyard of the Tuileries and the Place du Carrousel, the Emperor, on reaching his apartments, flung his hat on to one chair and his sword across another. The little Prince, coming in, buckled on his uncle's sword, donned his hat, and then gravely strutted after the Emperor and the Empress, humming a march. The Emperor, looking round, fondly embraced the little fellow, exclaiming, "What a pretty picture!" Ever on the alert to please her husband, the Empress sent for Monsieur Gérard and commanded him to paint a portrait of the young Prince in this costume. This picture was brought to Saint-Cloud the same day that the Empress heard of the death of her darling nephew.

He was scarcely three years old, when, seeing his bootmaker's bill being paid with five-franc pieces, he began to scream loudly, saying that he did not wish the portrait of "his uncle Bibiche" to be given away like that. This nickname of Bibiche, given by the young Prince to His Majesty, was first invented when he and the Emperor used to feed the gazelles in the park of Saint-Cloud. They

would only come to the Emperor, who fed them with snuff from his snuff-box, and him they used to follow about. He also liked to let little Napoleon feed them in this way, and give him a ride on their backs. The boy always called these animals *'bibiche'*, a nickname which he also liked to give his uncle.

This charming child, adored by his father and his mother, used all his well-nigh magical influence to reconcile them to each other. Taking his father's hand, he would lead him to Queen Hortense, and say, "Kiss her, papa, please do!" and when he had reconciled them thus, he was greatly delighted.

A child with such a charming disposition as this could not fail to make everyone adore him. How could the Emperor, who loved all children, help being passionately fond of him, even had he not been his nephew, and grandson of his dear Josephine, whom he never for an instant ceased to love? When croup, that dire malady so fatal to children, took him from his sorrowing parents, the boy showed promise of a most charming disposition, and encouraged the highest hopes. Proud, high-spirited, and susceptible to the noblest impressions, he was far from being disobedient or unruly. The idea of injustice was revolting to him, but wise, moderate counsel speedily influenced him. As the first-born of the new dynasty, he could not fail to win for himself all the affection and the solicitude of His Majesty the Emperor.

Malice and envy, which ever seek to blacken and sully that which is great, have given lying reasons for this almost fatherly attachment ; but the wise and the loyal can only see in it what really ought to be seen, to wit, the desire and the hope of having a successor to a grand and puissant dynasty. The death of this young Prince, a presage of mischance when at the zenith of his glory, disturbed all the plans which the Emperor had laid, and made him resolve to look to his direct line for an heir. Then it was that the idea of a divorce came to him, which did not happen until two years afterwards, though there were rumours of it during the journey from Fontainebleau. The Empress easily divined the fatal result for her which the little Prince's death would have ; and from that time this one dreadful idea possessed her, saddening her whole existence. At this untimely death she was inconsolable. For three days she shut herself up and wept bitterly, seeing only her women and taking next to no food. It seemed as if she were fearful of forgetting her sorrow, for she eagerly surrounded herself with all that could remind her of her irreparable loss. She obtained, not without difficulty, from Queen Hortense, some of the young Prince's hair, which she had framed in a black velvet case. The picture of the little Prince, by Gérard, never left her. I often saw this at La Malmaison, and never without keen emotion.



Yet how shall I describe the despair of Queen Hortense, as perfect a mother as she was a loving daughter? She never left her son for a moment all through his illness. He died in her arms, and the Queen, being desirous to stay by his lifeless body, thrust her arms through those of her chair, so that they could not remove her from this harrowing scene. At last nature could no longer bear such poignant sorrow. The unhappy mother fainted, and, when unconscious, they removed her to her own apartments, still seated in the same arm-chair, which she clutched convulsively. On coming to herself, the Queen uttered piercing shrieks. Her eyes were tearless, fixed in a dull, glassy stare; her lips were livid, and her countenance deadly pale. Nothing could bring tears to her eyes. At last, one of the chamberlains thought of placing the body of the dead Prince upon her knee. Then the tears fell in torrents; they saved her. What countless kisses she showered upon that little lifeless body! All France shared her grief.

## CHAPTER XXVI

*Return from the Prussian and Polish campaigns—Restoration of Rambouillet—Frescoes in the bath-room—The Emperor objects to them—The Court at Fontainebleau—Exorbitant innkeepers—Cardinal Caprara's little bill—Princess Catherine of Wurtemberg—Her marriage to the King of Westphalia—Jerome and his first wife—The Queen's affection for her husband—The Marquis de Maubreuil—The Czar's gifts—The Emperor at Fontainebleau—Cardinal de Belloy—The Emperor out hunting—His romantic adventures at Fontainebleau—Constant's mysterious commission—He acts as guide in the gloom—Madame de B.—The Emperor's ardour soon cools—Theatricals at Fontainebleau—Mademoiselle Mars and her gowns.*

WE reached Saint-Cloud on the 27th of July. The Emperor spent the summer partly here and partly at Fontainebleau. He only came to Paris for the grand receptions, and never stayed longer than four-and-twenty hours. During His Majesty's absence, the château of Rambouillet had been restored and entirely refurnished. The Emperor went to stay there for a few days. The first time he entered the bath-room, he stopped short at the door and looked about him with an air of vexation and surprise. All

round the walls the architect had put portraits in fresco of the Emperor's mother, His Majesty's sisters, Queen Hortense, &c. The sight of such a portrait-gallery in such a place greatly vexed the Emperor. "What nonsense!" he exclaimed. "Constant, fetch Marshal Duroc." When the Grand Marshal came, he said, "What idiot ever conceived such an idea as this? Send for the artist and tell him to paint it all out. He can't have much respect for the ladies to put them here in this indecent fashion!"

When the Court was at Fontainebleau, the inhabitants recouped themselves for His Majesty's long absences by putting a very high price upon all articles of food. Thus they made the most exorbitant profits, and more than one visitor to Fontainebleau imagined himself the victim of a band of Bedouin Arabs. While the Court stayed there, a bad bed in a bad inn cost twelve francs a night, while for the slightest meal fabulous sums were charged; even then it was horribly nasty. In fact, it was a regular system of pillage. Cardinal Caprara, known throughout Paris for his strictly economical habits, went once to Fontainebleau to pay his respects to the Emperor. At the hotel where he alighted he only took some broth, and the six members of his suite also had very light refreshment. Three hours later, when the Cardinal was preparing to leave, and had got into his carriage, the landlord

had the impudence, to present him with a bill for six hundred francs! The Cardinal indignantly repudiated it, and, losing his temper, threatened the innkeeper. In the end, however, he had to pay. But the Emperor at last got to hear of such shocking extortion, which greatly incensed him, and he immediately ordered a scale of charges with fixed prices to be drawn up, by which every landlord had to abide, all overcharge being forbidden. This put a stop to all the robbery and extortion of these Fontainebleau leeches.

On the 21st of August, Princess Catherine of Würtemberg arrived in Paris, the affianced bride of Prince Jerome Napoleon, King of Westphalia. This Princess, aged about twenty-four, was very beautiful and distinguished-looking. This match was made solely from motives of policy, yet love and mutual attraction could never have made a happier one. The Queen of Westphalia's brave conduct in 1814 is well known, as also her devotion to her dethroned husband, and her noble letters to her father, who sought to drag her from King Jerome's arms. I have heard it said that even after this marriage, so flattering to his ambition, Jerome continued to correspond with Miss Patterson, his first wife, and that he often sent Rico, his valet, to America, to learn news of the lady and her child. If this be true, such attention, as I take it, was not

only excusable but praiseworthy, nor did it prevent the Queen of Westphalia, who doubtless was not ignorant of the proceeding, from being perfectly happy with her husband. No more creditable authority can be cited than the Queen herself, who, writing to her father, the King of Würtemberg, says :

“Obliged by political reasons to wed the King, my husband, fate has willed that I should be the happiest of women. For my consort I cherish love, tenderness and esteem ; in this sad moment, why does the best of fathers seek to destroy my domestic happiness, which is all that remains to me ? I venture, dear father, to tell you that you and all my family misunderstand the King, my husband. A time will come, I hope, when you will be convinced that you misjudged him ; and then, in him as in me, you will recognise the most dutiful and the most affectionate of children.”

Her Majesty afterwards alludes to a “horrible event,” which was nothing less than the robbery with violence of a defenceless woman by a band of brigands, headed by the famous Marquis de Maubreuil, formerly equerry to the King of Westphalia. When touching upon the events of 1814, I shall allude to this shameful trap, and give certain little-known details concerning the chief persons implicated in so nefarious an outrage.

In the following September, a courier from St.

Petersburg brought His Majesty a letter from the Emperor Alexander, and, among other magnificent presents, two most beautiful pelisses of black fox and zibeline.

During Their Majesties' stay at Fontainebleau, the Emperor often drove out with the Empress through the town without escort of any kind. One day, when passing the hospice of Mont-Pierreux, the Empress noticed an aged priest, who from a window saluted Their Majesties. Acknowledging this, with all her wonted grace, the Empress drew the Emperor's attention to the venerable ecclesiastic. His Majesty stopped the carriage, and sent a footman to request the priest to come out and talk to him for a moment. The old man hastened to do so, and, to save him a few steps, the Emperor caused his carriage to be driven close up to the gateway of the hospice.

His Majesty greeted the venerable priest with great cordiality. The latter stated that before the Revolution he had been resident priest in one of the Fontainebleau parishes; that he had done his utmost not to emigrate, but under the Reign of Terror had been forced to do so, although he was then over seventy-five; that he subsequently returned to France, and now lived upon a slender income, which barely sufficed to pay for his board and lodging at the hospice.

"M. l'Abbé," said the Emperor, after listening

attentiv . . . shall give orders for your stipend to be doubled, and if that is not sufficient, I hope that you will apply to the Empress or to myself."

The good priest's eyes were full of tears, as he gratefully thanked His Majesty. "Unfortunately, Sire," said he, "I am too old to see much of your Majesty's reign or to profit by your bounty."

"You?" rejoined the Emperor, smiling; "why, you're a young man! Look at M. de Belloy; he is your senior by a long way, but we hope to have him with us for a good while yet." Then Their Majesties said good-bye to the old priest, leaving him surrounded by a crowd of townsfolk, upon whom this interesting scene and the Emperor's generosity made a deep impression.

M. de Belloy, Cardinal and Archbishop of Paris, to whom the Emperor in the foregoing conversation alluded, was then ninety-eight years old. He enjoyed excellent health, and often appeared in public. I never saw a more venerable-looking old man than he. The Emperor had a profound respect for him, and never missed an opportunity of showing this.

While at Fontainebleau, the Emperor went out hunting more often than he had ever done before. The regulation costume for a man was a green coat with gold facings and gold buttons, white

kerseymere breeches, and top-boots. This was the dress worn for stag-hunting. For shooting, a plain green coat with white buttons was worn by every sportsman, including His Majesty.

The Princesses, drove to the meet in a carriage-and-six, wearing elegant riding-habits and hats with black or white feathers.

One of the Emperor's sisters, I forget which one, used regularly to follow the hounds, accompanied by a bevy of charming ladies, who were always invited to lunch with the sportsmen and other members of the Court circle. One of these ladies, being beautiful and witty, attracted the Emperor's notice. At first there was an interchange of love-letters; and then one evening the Emperor ordered me to be the bearer of another missive. At Fontainebleau Palace there is an inner garden, called the Garden of Diana, to which Their Majesties alone had access. It is surrounded by buildings on all sides. On the left is the chapel, a Gothic structure with a dark gallery; on the right is the grand gallery, as far as I can recollect; in the centre building were the apartments of Their Majesties; while opposite, completing the quadrangle, were large arcades, behind which members of the suite were lodged.

Madame de B., the lady whom the Emperor had noticed, occupied ground-floor apartments at the



fear of these arcades. His Majesty warned me that I should find a window open by which I was cautiously to enter, and that in the dark I was to hand his note to a person who would ask me for it. It had to be done in the dark, as the window opened on to the garden, and a light might possibly have been noticed. Not knowing the interior of these apartments, I stepped in through the open window, thinking to set my foot on level ground. But there was a deep embrasure, and I slipped and fell heavily. At the noise of my fall I heard a scream and the slamming of a door. I sustained slight bruises on my head, my knee and my elbow.

Rising with some difficulty, I groped about in the dark, but hearing no further sound, and being afraid that if I made any more noise it might alarm the wrong people, I resolved to go back to the Emperor, whom I told of my mishap. Seeing that I was not seriously hurt, His Majesty laughed heartily, and said, "So there's a step, is there? It's just as well to know it. Let us wait until Madame de B. recovers from her fright, then I'll go and see her, and you shall come with me."

In an hour's time the Emperor went out with me by the door of his study opening on to the garden, and I silently led him to the window, which was still open. I helped him to get in, and, profiting by my experience, I managed to save him a tumble.

When safe inside, the Emperor told me to retire; but I still felt somewhat alarmed, and expressed my fears, when he told me not to be such a baby, as there was not the slightest danger. His Majesty, it seems, was more successful than myself in finding an entrance, for he did not come back until day-break. On his return, he joked with me about my clumsiness, admitting, however, that if I had not warned him, a like misadventure might have befallen him.

Although Madame de B. deserved to be sincerely loved, her intrigue with the Emperor did not last long. It was but a mere passing fancy. I think it must have been the difficulty of his nocturnal visits that so soon served to cool His Majesty's ardour, for he was not so amorous as to brave all perils in order to get a sight of his fair one. The Emperor told me what a fright my fall had given the lady, and of her kind enquiries as to my condition. Though His Majesty had reassured her, this did not prevent her from sending round next day to know how I was, the message being brought by a confidential servant, who told me how concerned her mistress had been at my accident.

Theatrical performances often took place at Fontainebleau. The actors at all the leading theatres were commanded to play the best pieces from their repertory. Mademoiselle Mars had to act the same

evening she arrived, but at Essonne, where she was obliged to stop for a moment, the road being blocked by cows going to and from Fontainebleau, her luggage was stolen, and she did not notice her loss until long after leaving. Not only had all her theatrical costumes disappeared, but she had no other clothes except those she was wearing. It would have taken at least twelve hours to get what was necessary from Paris. It was then two o'clock; and that evening she had to appear in the brilliant part of *Célimène*. Though greatly distressed at her misfortune, Mademoiselle Mars did not lose her head, but went round to all the shops in the town and had new dresses cut out and made in the most tasteful style; these completely replaced those which she had lost.

## CHAPTER XXVII

*The Emperor in Italy—Swift preparations for the journey—Servants sent in all directions—Constant always with the Emperor—The commissariat arrangements—The Emperor's meals and meal-times—His cooks and butlers—M. Colin and M. Pfister—The Emperor arrives at Milan—Impromptu illumination—Delight of Prince Eugene and the Milanese—The Emperor's affection for the Vice-Queen—Constant complimented by the Viceroy—The Emperor at La Scala—Journey through Brescia and Verona—Aspect of Lombardy—Constant's horror of official addresses—Our reception at Vicenza—The Emperor an early riser—The rice-fields—Picturesqueness of the scenery.*

IN the November of this year I accompanied Their Majesties to Italy. We knew a few days beforehand that the Emperor would take this journey; but, as usual, neither the day nor even the week had been fixed, and on the 15th we heard we were to leave at early morning on the 16th. I was up all night, like all the other servants, packing His Majesty's things, while my wife got my own luggage ready. I had hardly finished when the Emperor sent for me, and that

meant that in ten minutes we should start. At four o'clock a.m. His Majesty drove off. As the route he would take was never known beforehand, the Grand Marshal, Grand Chamberlain, and head equerry sent detachments of servants in advance along all the different routes by which the Emperor might travel. The suite included a valet and a page of the bed-chamber. As for me, I never left His Majesty, and my carriage was always close behind his own. The coach belonging to this advanced detachment had an iron bedstead, with bedding, linen, clothes, &c. For the kitchen service there was a coach, in shape like the *coucous* of the Place Louis Quinze, in Paris, which carried the Emperor's Chambertin, besides other choice wines for the Court officials. Ordinary wine was bought *en route*. There was also a kitchen-range and utensils and a portable stove.

Another vehicle contained extra supplies of wine and provisions. All these conveyances preceded the Emperor by some hours. It was the Grand Marshal who fixed the stopping-places for meals, and it was usual to alight either at the Archbishop's, the Town Hall, the sub-prefect's, or the mayor's. The *maître d'hôtel* at once busied himself with the provisions; fires were promptly lighted and spits set turning. If the Emperor got out and took lunch, the viands consumed were at once

replaced, and the coaches filled with pasties, game, &c. But it sometimes happened that the Emperor gave orders to go straight on without stopping, when everything had to be packed up again, and the commissariat department moved on. Sometimes, too, the Emperor would stop short by the roadside, sit down under a tree, and ask for his lunch. Roustan, and the footmen got out the eatables from His Majesty's carriage, which was furnished with little silver saucepans containing chickens, partridges, &c. Provisions were also brought from the other carriages. M. Pfister waited on the Emperor; everyone else ate a morsel or two with his fingers. A fire was lighted to heat the coffee, and in less than half an hour everything was cleared away and the carriages drove on.

As steward and cooks the Emperor had MM. Dunau, Léonard, Rouff and Gérard. M. Colin took M. Pfister's place when the latter went mad during the campaign of 1809. All were skilful and zealous servants. MM. Soupé and Pierrugues had charge of the wine department, and in this office they were succeeded by their sons.

We travelled at a great rate as far as the Mont-Cenis, but here we had to check our speed. The weather for some days past had been atrocious, and the roads were in a very bad state owing to the rain, which fell in torrents. The Emperor

reached Milan on the 22nd, at mid-day, and in spite of our delay on the Mont-Cenis, the remainder of the journey had been so rapid that no one as yet expected His Majesty.

The Viceroy was not apprised of his step-father's arrival until the latter was but a few miles distant. We saw him arrive in hot haste, followed by a few attendants. The Emperor ordered the carriage to be stopped, and directly the door of it was thrown open he held out his hand to Prince Eugene, saying, in the most affectionate way, "Jump in here with us, my dear Prince, and we'll drive into Milan together."

In spite of the surprise created by the Emperor's sudden arrival, we had hardly entered the town before all the houses were illuminated. The beautiful Litta, Casani and Melzi palaces sparkled with a thousand lights. The splendid cupola of the cathedral was illuminated by coloured fires, while in the centre of the Forum Bonaparte, the alleys of which also were lighted up, one saw the colossal equestrian statue of the Emperor, on each side being transparencies in the form of a star, with the initials S.M.I.R. At eight o'clock crowds assembled outside the palace, where fireworks and military bands added to the brilliance of the whole scene. All the civic authorities were presented to His Majesty.

Next morning there was a council of ministers, the Emperor presiding. At mid-day he rode to attend mass, accompanied by the Viceroy and his staff, and after the *Te Deum* the Emperor reviewed the troops, before leaving for Monza with the Viceroy. This was the residence of the Vice-Queen, Princess Amélie, for whom the Emperor had a deep regard. She was, indeed, most beautiful and virtuous; and the Emperor often quoted her as a type of perfect womanhood. Prince Eugene was in every way worthy of so accomplished a consort, and I was rejoiced to see how happy he looked. Amid all his eagerness to forestall the slightest wish of his stepfather, he was yet so kind as to speak several times to me, and express his interest at my advance in the Emperor's service and good-will. Nothing could have given me more pleasure than these marks of attention from a Prince for whom I always had a sincere, and, I may say, an affectionate attachment.

The Emperor remained a long while with the Vice-Queen, whose cleverness and wit vied with her beauty. He returned to Milan for dinner, and immediately afterwards there was a reception. That evening I was in attendance upon His Majesty at the opera house of La Scala. The Emperor did not stay to the end of the performance, but retired to his apartments at an early hour, and sat up working the greater part of the night. This did not



prevent our starting for Verona before eight o'clock next morning.

His Majesty travelled straight through Brescia to Verona. I should like to have had the time to inspect some of the curious objects of interest which we passed on our way. But when in the Emperor's suite this was not easy, for he only halted in order to review troops, and cared more for fortifications than ruins.

At Verona the Emperor dined, or supped (for it was somewhat late), with Their Majesties the King and Queen of Bavaria, who had arrived almost at the same time that we did. Early next morning we left for Vicenza.

Although the season was somewhat far advanced, I greatly enjoyed the lovely scenery along the road from Verona to Vicenza. Imagine an immense plain, cut up into countless fields, bordered by trees of different kinds, but all of tall, graceful shape, chiefly elms and poplars. They formed long avenues, and vines clustered at their stems, being intertwined with their branches, composing interminable garlands of verdure, while beyond, broad yellow wheat-fields lay all golden in the sunlight and the breeze.

Lost thus in admiration of these fertile plains, I found we had suddenly reached Vicenza. The population, headed by the local authorities, awaited

the Emperor beneath a splendid triumphal arch at the gate of the city. We were all famished; and when going to bed that night His Majesty remarked to me how glad he had been to sit down to table. I had literally trembled at the thought of these long-winded harangues in Italian, which seemed all the longer because I could not understand a single word. Fortunately, however, the notables of Vicenza were discreet enough not to be over-tedious, and their speechifying did not last more than a few minutes.

That evening His Majesty went to the theatre. I was tired, and profiting by the Emperor's absence, thought to get a little rest, when someone invited me to come on the roof of the Servite convent to get a view of the illuminations. I did so, and the spectacle was indeed a magnificent one. It was as if the whole town were on fire. On returning to the palace I heard that His Majesty had given orders to start at two o'clock in the morning. I had only one hour for sleep; I made the most of it.

At the time fixed the Emperor drove away, we following at lightning speed along the Stra road. We stopped at Stra for the night, and early next morning went on by the high road to Fusina. The landscape is much the same, yet not so pleasant as that near Vicenza, being all plantations of mulberry

and olive-trees, interspersed with fields of maize and hemp. Beyond Stra, too, the rice-fields begin. The vine is little cultivated hereabouts, for the ground is too flat and damp for it to flourish. Yet on the slopes there are vineyards, and the vegetation of the whole district is rich and of astonishing fecundity, albeit recent wars have left traces only to be effaced by a long and lasting peace.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

*Arrival at Fusina—The barge and the gondolas—We approach Venice—Triumphal entry along the Grand Canal—The Emperor plans a garden for the Venetians—The Emperor as a talker—His remarks as to the former government of Venice—The lion grown old—Visit to the arsenal—The Bucintoro—The nuptials of the sea interrupted by the French—The gondoliers—Regatta in the Emperor's honour—View of the Piazza at night—Saint Mark's and the Ducal Palace—The clock tower—Roustan and I visit a Greek family—The Emperor questions me—My curiosity is disappointed—A fair Greek's infatuation for the Emperor—Her husband's vigilance—He removes his wife—The Emperor's decree in favour of the Venetians—We leave Venice and return to France.*

ON reaching Fusina, the Emperor was met by the Venetian authorities. His Majesty embarked in the *peota*, or municipal barge, and, accompanied by a long train of boats, we advanced towards Venice. We servants followed the Emperor in little black gondolas, which looked like floating hearses. The Brenta was covered with them, and nothing was more strange than to hear, coming from these gloomy coffins, a delicious harmony of voices and

instruments. The boat conveying His Majesty, however, and the gondolas of the chief dignitaries, were all magnificently decorated.

We thus arrived at the mouth of the river, where we had to wait nearly half an hour until the locks were opened, which had to be slowly and cautiously done; otherwise the waters of the Brenta, pent up by a canal considerably above the sea-level, falling suddenly and with great force, would have submerged our gondolas. Leaving the Brenta, we floated out on to the lagoons, where, in far distance, from the sea there rose up the wondrous city of Venice. Boats, gondolas, and even some heavy vessels, with sailors and townsfolk in holiday attire, now approached us from all sides, passing backwards and forwards with extreme dexterity and speed.

The Emperor stood in the stern of the barge, and, as each gondola passed by, and cries of "Evviva Napoleone, imperatore e re!" rent the air, he acknowledged such greetings by one of those low bows which he made with so much dignity and grace, raising his hat and lowering it almost to his knees, while never bending his head.

Escorted by this vast flotilla, the municipal *peota* being its flagship, as it were, His Majesty at length entered the Grand Canal, flanked on either side by splendid palaces, every window of

which was filled with spectators and seemed bright with flags. On landing, the Emperor was received by a deputation of members of the Senate and Venetian nobles. He stopped for a moment in the Piazza San Marco, walked through some of the *calli*, and chose the site for a public garden, for which the municipal architect submitted plans. For Venetians it was a novel spectacle to see trees planted in the ground, with flower-beds and green turf.

The complete absence of all verdure and vegetation, and the silence in the streets, where horses and carriages are unknown, usually combine to give an air both melancholy and forlorn to this city in the sea. During His Majesty's visit, however, such sadness completely disappeared.

The Viceroy and the Grand Marshal were present that evening when the Emperor was going to bed, and, while undressing him, I heard part of their talk, which was wholly about the government of Venice prior to the reunion of this Republic to the French Empire. His Majesty spoke almost alone, for Prince Eugene and Marshal Duroc were content to add a word or two every now and then, by way of a text for the Emperor, and to prevent him from ending his discourse all too soon. Discourses they really were, for, as a matter of fact, His Majesty always struck the nail on the head, and left but little for others to say. Nor could

anyone complain—so freshly, tersely and vividly did he expound his views. His Majesty did not know how to *chat*, as the writer of the diary included in these Memoirs has justly observed, but he knew how to *speak*, and speak with quite indescribable charm. In this respect, I consider the author of the Aix-la-Chapelle diary has scarcely done him justice.

On this particular evening, while going to bed, His Majesty spoke of the ancient State of Venice; and, listening to him, I learnt far more on this subject than I should ever have done from the best of books. The Viceroy having remarked that certain patricians deplored their former liberty, the Emperor exclaimed, “Liberty, indeed! Fiddlesticks! Venice had no liberty left; only a few noble families enjoyed this, and they oppressed the remainder of the population. Liberty with the Council of Ten! Liberty with the State Inquisitors! Liberty with the denouncing lions, the dungeons, the prisons!” Marshal Duroc observed that latterly this severe rule had considerably altered. “Yes, certainly,” replied the Emperor; “the Lion of Saint Mark had grown old—had lost his teeth and his claws. Venice was but the shadow of her former self, and her last Doge found that he ranked higher than before by becoming a senator of the French Empire.” Seeing that the Viceroy smiled at this, His Majesty gravely

added, "I am not joking, sirs. A Roman senator considered himself more than a King; a French senator is at least the equal of a Doge. I want foreigners to become used to showing the utmost respect to all the constitutional bodies of the Empire, even treating a French citizen with great consideration; and I shall get them to do so, too. Good-night, Eugene. Duroc, see to it that tomorrow's reception is properly managed. After it is over we are going to visit the arsenal. Good-night, gentlemen. Constant, come back in ten minutes and fetch my light; I feel sleepy. Those gondolas rock one just like a cradle."

Next day, after receiving the Venetian authorities, His Majesty visited the arsenal. It is a huge structure, so carefully fortified as to be well-nigh impregnable. The aspect of the interior is somewhat curious on account of the several tiny islands all joined together by bridges. The various buildings and magazines thus appear to be floating on the surface of the water. We entered by a very handsome marble bridge, ornamented by columns and statues. The approach from the sea is beset with rocks and sand-banks, their position being marked by long piles. In war-time, so they told us, these piles were removed, and hostile vessels, if rash enough to venture among these shallows, inevitably foundered. Formerly the arsenal contained equip-



ments for eighty thousand men, infantry and cavalry, exclusive of complete armaments for ships of war. The arsenal is surrounded by high towers, which command an extensive view on all sides. On the highest of these towers, in the centre of the edifice, as also in all the others, there are sentinels on duty night and day, who signal the approach of vessels, which they can sight at a great distance. Nothing could be more imposing than the dockyards, where two thousand men can work easily. Sail-making is done by women, who are superintended by others of their sex.

The Emperor only stopped a little while to look at the *Bucintoro*, that splendid vessel in which the Doge of Venice floated forth to espouse the sea. A Venetian can never see without regret this ancient monument of his city's power. A sailor told us, with tears in his eyes, that the last time he witnessed the marriage of the Doge with the Adriatic was in 1796, a year before the capture of Venice. This man told us that he was then in the service of the last Doge of the Republic, Signor Louis Monini, and that next year, in 1797, the French entered Venice on Ascension Day, the very day on which the ceremony of the Doge's nuptials with the Adriatic was performed. Since that date the sea has remained a widow. The good sailor spoke in touching terms of his old master, who could never

bring himself to swear the oath of allegiance to the Austrians, and who, when yielding up the keys of the city, fainted.

The gondoliers are at once servants, messengers, confidants and companions in all amorous adventures which their masters may undertake. Nothing can equal the fidelity, courage and light-heartedness of these brave fellows. They fearlessly brave all sea-storms in their frail gondolas, and such is their skill as oarsmen that in the narrowest canals they pass and repass each other at a great rate without ever causing the least accident.

I had an opportunity of judging of the skill of these hardy mariners the day after our visit to the arsenal. The Emperor crossed the lagoons to inspect the fortified port of Malamocco, and, on his return, the gondoliers had arranged a regatta in his honour. There was a gala performance at the theatre in the evening, and the whole city was illuminated. For that matter, one might think that Venice was always *en fête*, as it is the custom to spend half the night either in business or pleasure, and the streets are as noisy and full of people at midnight as are those of Paris at four o'clock in the afternoon. The shops, especially those in the square of Saint Mark, are lighted up in a dazzlingly brilliant fashion, and crowds fill the *cafés*, where ices and refreshments of all kinds are on sale.

To this Venetian method of life the Emperor did not conform, but went to bed at the same time as in Paris. If not sitting up to transact business with his ministers, he went out in a gondola, and visited the principal public buildings. It was thus that, as one of His Majesty's suite, I saw the church of Saint Mark and the Ducal Palace.

The church of Saint Mark has five entrances superbly decorated with marble columns; the gates are of sculptured bronze. Above the central door were the four famous bronze horses, which the Emperor had removed to Paris to adorn the triumphal arch in the Place du Carrousel. The church tower, or *campanile*, is detached from the main edifice; it is over three hundred feet high. A commodious passage without steps leads to the summit, whence a magnificent view is obtained of Venice and her countless islands, and facing the sea a huge dyke, sixty feet broad and double as high, built of stone. This gigantic structure guards Venice against the inroads of the sea.

The Venetians profess singular admiration for a clock tower at one corner of the Piazza. This clock shows the progress of sun and moon across the twelve signs of the zodiac. In a niche underneath is seen a gilt, life-size figure of the Virgin. We were told that at certain festivals of the year each stroke of the chimes caused two angels bearing

trumpets in their hands to appear, followed by the three Magi, who prostrated themselves at the feet of the Holy Virgin. We saw nothing of all this—only two big, black figures, which struck the hours on the bell with iron maces.

The Ducal Palace is a gloomy-looking place, made more so by the propinquity of the prisons, from which it is only separated by a narrow canal.

In Venice there are merchants of all nationalities. Jews and Greeks abound. Roustan, who spoke the language of the latter, was much in quest by the leading Greeks. The heads of a certain Greek family came one day to invite him to pay them a visit. They lived on one of the adjacent islands. Roustan told me of his wish to accept the invitation, and proposed that I should accompany him, at which I was enchanted. On reaching the island we were received by the Greeks as if we were old friends. We were shown into a sumptuously-furnished parlour. A large divan ran round the walls, the floor being covered with artistically-woven mats. Our hosts were six in number, wealthy merchants all engaged in the same commerce. I should have found it rather dull if one of them who spoke French had not talked to me. The others conversed with Roustan in their native language. They offered us coffee, fruits, sherbet and pipes. I never cared about smoking,

and knowing what dislike the Emperor had for all smells, especially for that of tobacco, I declined the offer of a pipe, and expressed a fear that perhaps my clothes might smell of smoke. Such squeamishness on my part, as it seemed to me, served to lower me not a little in the consideration of our hosts. Nevertheless, when we took our departure they pressed us to pay them another visit, but we were obliged to decline as we knew that the Emperor's stay would not be prolonged.

On my return the Emperor asked me if I had gone about the town, what I thought of it, if I had been into some of the houses, and what had seemed to me noteworthy. I answered as best I could, and as His Majesty seemed in a merry, talkative humour, I told him of our visit to the Greek family. The Emperor asked me what the Greeks thought of him. "Sire," I replied, "the one who spoke French seemed to be entirely devoted to Your Majesty. He told me of the hope cherished by his compatriots and himself, that the Emperor of the French, who had gone to fight the Mamelukes in Egypt, would also one day constitute himself the Liberator of Greece."

"Ah, Monsieur Constant," cried the Emperor, as he soundly pinched my ear, "so you've been meddling with politics, have you?"

"Pardon me, Sire, I am only repeating what I

heard. It is not astonishing that all the oppressed count upon Your Majesty's help. Those poor Greeks appear to be passionately devoted to their country, and, above all, they cordially detest the Turks."

"Very good, very good," said His Majesty, "but I have first of all to look after my own affairs. Constant," resumed the Emperor, suddenly changing the subject, and smiling ironically, "what did you think of the shapely Greek ladies? How many models did you see worthy of Canova, or of David?"

I was obliged to tell the Emperor that what chiefly induced me to accept Roustan's proposal was the hope of seeing some of these much-vaunted beauties, and that I had been cruelly disappointed in not seeing so much as the shadow of a woman.

At this candid avowal, the Emperor, who expected as much, burst out laughing, and fell to pinching my ears again, calling me a libertine.

"Don't you know, you rogue," said he, "that your good friends the Greeks have adopted the customs of the Turks, whom they so cordially detest, and that, like them, they shut up their wives and daughters to keep them out of sight of such naughty fellows as you?"

Though the Greek women in Venice are closely watched by their husbands they are not shut up in a seraglio like the ladies in Turkey. During our

stay in Venice an exalted personage spoke to the Emperor of a young and pretty Greek lady, who was an enthusiastic admirer of His Majesty. She was most anxious to have the honour of a private interview. Though strictly guarded by her jealous husband, she had found a way of sending the Emperor a letter, in which she expressed all her love and admiration for him. So passionate a letter made His Majesty anxious to make its writer's acquaintance, but it was necessary to be cautious. The Emperor was not the man to use his power to rob a husband of his wife, yet the very secrecy with which the whole matter was managed put the lady's husband on his guard; and, before she could get to see the Emperor, her prudent husband had her removed far from Venice, being careful to conceal her flight and all traces of her whereabouts.

When the Emperor heard of her disappearance, he laughingly exclaimed, "There's another old fool who thinks himself able to fight against his destiny!" During the rest of his stay in Venice the Emperor formed no other amorous attachment.

Before leaving the city, the Emperor issued a decree which was hailed with the greatest enthusiasm, and which heightened the regret which the Venetians felt at his departure. The department of the Adriatic, of which Venice formed the centre, was extended along the sea-board from Aquileia to

Adria. The decree also gave instructions for the harbour to be repaired, the canals deepened and cleansed, the great sea-wall at Palestrina, with its jetties, to be repaired and enlarged, for a canal to be made between the arsenal and the canal leading to Malamocco, and, finally, that this same canal be made deep enough for war vessels to have ingress and egress.

Other clauses dealt with charitable establishments, the administration of which was entrusted to a council; with the cession to the city by Royal decree of the island of Saint Christopher as a public cemetery, for hitherto in Venice the evil custom had prevailed, as indeed throughout all Italy, of burying the dead in churches. In fine, the decree ordered a better system of lighting to be adopted in the fine square of Saint Mark, the construction of new quays, passages, &c.

When we left Venice, the Emperor was accompanied to the canal-bank by crowds of the inhabitants, the throng being quite as great as that which greeted him on his arrival. Treviso, Udine and Mantua all vied with each other in giving His Majesty a right royal reception. King Joseph had left the Emperor to return to Naples, but Prince Murat and the Viceroy still accompanied His Majesty. He only stopped two or three days in Milan, and then continued his homeward journey.



At Marengo the civic dignitaries and the population of Alessandria awaited him, and they formed a torchlight procession in his honour. We went straight through Turin. On the 30th of December we crossed the Mont-Cenis, and on the 1st of January, in the evening, we reached the Tuileries.

END OF VOL. II

